United Nations S/PV.7445

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7445th meeting
Tuesday, 19 May 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2015/331)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-14506 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2015/331)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia, who is joining today's meeting via videoconference from Mogadishu.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Nicholas Kay, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; and Mr. Maman Sidikou, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Kay and Mr. Sidikou, who are joining today's meeting via videoconference from Addis Ababa.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/331, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kay.

Mr. Kay: I wish to thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Council. I am glad to be doing so with my friend and colleague Ambassador Maman Sidikou. Yesterday we briefed the African Union Peace and Security Council together, which is why we are joining the Council today from Addis Ababa. The African Union-United Nations partnership in Somalia is unique, strong and essential for success.

Let me begin by thanking the Council for its continued support to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and to the peacebuilding and State-building process in Somalia.

When I spoke to the Council in February, I said that I was both excited and worried about the year ahead. I was excited because, after too long a pause, there was the prospect of political progress again. And indeed, momentum has been regained. Somalia's third Government in less than three years is hard at work, and the Federal Parliament has begun its sixth session. Somalia's federal, regional and local leaders, parliamentarians and people from all walks of life are building a federal State, step by step, through dialogue and reconciliation. The prevailing environment of mistrust accumulated over nearly 25 years makes the task difficult and painstaking; but it must continue, and it deserves our sustained support.

Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, as well as the Prime Minister, Speaker and the leaders of Puntland, Jubba and South-West Administrations, have reiterated their determination to deliver Somalia's Vision 2016 plan without any extension of the term of the Federal Parliament or President in August and September 2016, respectively. There are several important targets the Government has set for itself in the coming months, including completing the formation of interim regional administrations and assemblies; advancing the constitutional review; establishing the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) and the Boundaries and Federation Commission; and finalizing priority legislation on political parties, citizenship and elections.

Once Parliament has approved the nomination of commissioners for the National Independent Electoral Commission, the NIEC will face a compressed timeline to discharge its duties. Upon its establishment, the Commission will need to decide swiftly on how to implement its mandate. The United Nations will deploy an electoral assessment mission to advise and determine, in close collaboration with stakeholders, the nature and extent of United Nations electoral support in Somalia. The United Nations — together with the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the European Union and Member States — continues to support the formation of the interim regional administrations. Many challenges remain, in particular ensuring inclusivity. More needs to be achieved in terms of local reconciliation. Women, minorities and youth must be well represented as part of that inclusivity.

Progress on federalism has not been matched by similar progress on the constitutional review process.

On 6 May, the Chairperson of the independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission resigned, but there should be no let-up in moving the process forward. The United Nations is supporting the commissioners and other relevant institutions in starting the constitutional review process in earnest without further delay. I am also concerned about the timetable for elections in Somaliland, which were due next month. The recent decision by the House of Elders to postpone elections for 22 months until March 2017 is a disappointment. The United Nations has joined other international partners in urging a reconciliation of this timetable based on a political consensus among all Somaliland stakeholders.

The security of United Nations staff in Somalia remains a priority. Tragically, on 20 April a terrorist attack in Garoowe claimed the lives of four UNICEF staff members and three Somali guards. Al-Shabaab targeted individuals who were working hard to improve the lives of Somali children and families. It was, as President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud said, "an attack against the future of the country". We honour our fallen colleagues by continuing their work. We have to ensure a balance between our duty of care to staff and the delivery of our mandate to support the Somalis.

Overall, the United Nations — agencies, funds and programmes and mission combined — have on average 1,400 people deployed throughout Somalia. We must ensure adequate protection for these teams. In that regard, I want to thank the Council for its support to the expansion of the United Nations guard unit, which provides vital protection to United Nations staff within the Mogadishu International Airport compound and the new offices we have moved into in Mogadishu city. This is the first time a Security Council-mandated mission has operated from outside the airport zone since 1995.

I remain concerned about security in Somalia and about the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to the wider subregion, demonstrated by the heinous attack on Kenya's Garissa University College in April. We need to monitor closely and be able to respond to any sign that Al-Shabaab is benefiting from their links to extremist groups in Yemen and from the instability there. Counter-terrorism requires efforts on many fronts. I hope that the coming weeks will see even closer cooperation among Member States to address this threat at the subregional level, including measures to prevent and counter violent extremism. With so much at stake between now and 2016, we can expect Al-Shabaab to do everything it can to derail the political process in Somalia.

Renewing the joint Somali and African Union offensive against Al-Shabaab is an urgent priority. I once again pay tribute to the courage of the Somali national army and our African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) colleagues. The African Union and the United Nations recently completed a joint mission to Somalia to assess the benchmarks for a United Nations peacekeeping mission and the impact of the surge of AMISOM troops, and to provide recommendations on the next steps in the military campaign. My colleague Ambassador Sidikou and His Excellency the Prime Minister will brief further on this.

The development of the Somali national army and the Somali police is an imperative for both the defeat of Al-Shabaab and the AMISOM exit strategy. The Guulwade (Victory) Plan referred to in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/331) seeks to train and equip the national army for joint operations now. It provides a sound framework, but business as usual will not be enough to support it. A robust architecture for the delivery of international support to the national army is needed, and we are consulting all partners on the options. A similar plan for the police, including regional police, is also needed.

I am encouraged that the mechanisms created in 2014 to support the implementation of the "New Deal" Somali Compact are starting to perform. The Government has exercised leadership in bringing all partners together. A portfolio of seven programmes, aligned with the Federal Government's priorities and donor resources, and with a value of over $100 million, has been approved for inclusion in the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund. I thank all donors who have pledged support, and further encourage them to support Somalia's recovery through these mechanisms. However, the alignment and coordination of international assistance behind Somali leadership is uneven. Of the funds generously pledged at Brussels in 2013, only about 10 per cent have been committed through the Compact architecture. I encourage all Somalia's partners to adhere to our collective commitments, and especially to increase their use of national systems.

Although Somalia's financial system remains high-risk, the Federal Government and its international partners are taking steps within the New Deal framework to ensure robust oversight of the overall governance architecture. There is still a long way to

go, but I am pleased to report that a Treasury Single Account is now in place, creating a single channel for national revenues and payments.

There is work to do on human rights as well. This year, Somalia will need to report on progress made on their commitments in the universal periodic review. I note with concern that there has been a marked increase in executions and death sentences handed out in 2015 despite Somalia's commitment to put a moratorium on executions. I also remain concerned about threats and intimidation of journalists in Somalia. I welcome the African Union's report on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by AMISOM soldiers and commend the work of the investigations team. As the Council has already noted, there is now a need to follow up. Ambassador Sidikou will brief further on this.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains alarming. The numbers speak for themselves. Some 730,000 Somalis continue to be unable to meet their most basic daily food needs; an additional 2.3 million people are at risk of sliding into the same situation; among them, over 1.1 million Somalis remain displaced, the majority women and children. This situation requires constant attention, adequate funding and continuous upgrades to our analytical and forecasting capabilities. One third into the year, the humanitarian appeal is only 12 per cent funded, having received only $100 million of the $863 million needed. The situation could be further compounded by a poor rainy season, if that happens, the closure of the Somali remittance operators and the escalating conflict in Yemen. Between 27 March and 14 May, Somalia received nearly 7,000 arrivals, of whom the vast majority, about 92 per cent, were Somali nationals, many of them with refugee status in Yemen. The United Nations is actively supporting efforts to assist those returning.

The high-level partnership forum in Mogadishu planned for 29 July will be an opportunity for Somalia and its partners to come together to agree on priority action between now and 2016. But continued progress between now and then will take sustained attention and commitment from all sides. I believe that UNSOM's mandate remains relevant for the coming year. As the federalism process moves forward, we will adjust the focus of our efforts. Our work in Somalia's regions will become ever more critical, and we will seek to maximize our support to existing and new administrations within our mandate for providing good offices and strategic policy advice. That requires logistical and security support in difficult circumstances. I look forward to the strategic review of the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia that is also scheduled for July. It will help us to establish what is feasible, including for supporting emerging administrations where UNSOM does not have a presence. We will continue to update the Council on the adequacy of security arrangements. Finally, we will keep under review the preparations for an electoral process in September 2016, and provide further advice on the implications as required.

While it is too soon to celebrate definitive success in Somalia, I believe we would be missing a strategic opportunity if we failed to appreciate just how much the Somalis and the international community are achieving. As we cast our eye over the wider region and beyond, where else do we see a country, once mired in conflict, that now has progressively better functioning governance, where political dialogue is replacing the rule of the gun and, most importantly, where violent extremism is being successfully countered? A country that refugees once fled in their millions is now receiving refugees from other countries, such as Yemen, and welcoming home its own citizens. It is an honour for me to work in such a context and with such dedicated international partners and brave United Nations colleagues. The world should not squander this opportunity. We should reinforce success with increased engagement and resources in the coming period, and I am grateful for the Council's continued support.

The President: I thank Mr. Kay for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Sidikou.

Mr. Sidikou: I am honoured and pleased to address the Security Council today on the situation in Somalia.

I would like to brief the Council on three important developments — the prevailing security situation in Somalia; my thoughts on the recently concluded joint African Union-United Nations benchmarking exercise; and the outcomes of our investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse and the steps that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has taken to ensure an effective prevention and response regime. There have also been significant political developments, especially relating to the federalization process, the constitutional review and the electoral process, that my Office has been supporting, together with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and

the Federal Government of Somalia, as my good friend and colleague Nick Kay discussed in his briefing this morning.

With regard to the security situation, the overall prevailing security situation in Somalia can be described as having elevated terrorism threat levels characterized by a rise in Al-Shabaab activities, mainly owing to an increased number of attacks involving improvised explosive devices and targeted assassinations. Overall, Al-Shabaab activities are likely to continue, since its intention of carrying out terrorist attacks and its ability to do so have not diminished. Targeted assassinations seem to be their preferred tactic, owing to their high effectiveness and low cost. In response, however, we — and by that I mean AMISOM, together with our Somali counterparts — have boosted our joint operations, especially in urban centres, in order to continue to disrupt Al-Shabaab activities.

In terms of offensive operations, I should emphasize that AMISOM troops, together with the Somali national army, have not relented in our efforts to defeat Al-Shabaab. Operation Eagle and Operation Indian Ocean have shown that AMISOM's offensive operations against Al-Shaabab can produce positive results, particularly in reducing that terrorist group's territorial control. I would also like to assure the Council that we will be reinvigorating operations against Al-Shabaab as part of the outcomes and recommendations of the recently concluded joint African Union-United Nations mission, and that there will soon be a more prominent resumption of offensive operations in some areas. For obvious operational security reasons, I will leave it at that.

I would now like to turn to the second issue, relating to my thoughts on the outcomes of the joint African Union-United Nations mission on benchmarks for a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia, and its recommendations for the next steps in the military campaign begun last month in Somalia from 14 to 25 April. AMISOM, the African Union (AU) Commission and UNSOM have initiated consultations with the troop-contributing countries and are working to secure their necessary buy-in on the recommendations. The joint mission reviewed the benchmarks for a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia as outlined in resolution 2124 (2013), and found that, while progress was being made on various benchmarks at varying speeds, the situation in Somalia as a whole would not be conducive to the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation until the end of 2016, at the earliest. It is gratifying that, in its draft report, the joint AU-United Nations mission appreciates that, with the targeted support of partners, there has been considerable success in reducing Al-Shabaab's territorial control and degrading its leadership. That, in turn, has created the essential space for the unfolding of the political process, especially the federalization process, albeit with uneven progress across the regions.

The joint offensives of AMISOM and the Somali national army have also provided the space needed for stabilization efforts in the recovered areas, despite the fact that a number of important factors have posed challenges to it. While the joint operations were able to recover territory, Al-Shabaab has still retained certain capabilities, mostly employing asymmetric warfare tactics, that have affected the population's confidence in the army and AMISOM and impeded further necessary action against it, largely because AMISOM does not have the configuration and resources to respond accordingly. In particular, the force's effectiveness was undermined by a lack of most of the force enablers and multipliers authorized under resolution 2124 (2103), including the helicopters capable of giving it the degree of agility and flexibility it needs to adjust to Al-Shabaab's change of tactics. Given the extent of the threat and the status of the political process, ending the surge in uniformed personnel before the end of 2016 could run a serious risk of reversals that could derail Vision 2016's objectives and risk the success of the investment that has been made by all concerned. Finally, therefore, AMISOM's continued presence is potentially required until the end of 2016.

I therefore welcome the recommendation to extend the surge with a structured, targeted reconfiguration of AMISOM designed to respond to evolving realities. That extension will enable AMISOM to achieve three interlocking objectives. First, it will allow the Mission to resume offensive operations against Al-Shabaab, which will be conducted under an enhanced AMISOM chain of command, in a cross-sector manner when necessary, with specialized capabilities based on the use of Mission assets, including helicopters which may be generated from within or without the continent while recognizing the limitations and risks involved.

Secondly, the extension will enable the consolidation and stabilization of the recovered areas, which will require a gradual shift to police and necessitate an agreement on the rebalancing of AMISOM uniformed

personnel numbers at the right time, dictated by an agreed sequencing of operations that is continually adapted. The enabling of policing will free up troops for area security operations, which is a requirement for stabilization. In addition, the establishment of a joint AMISOM/UNSOM civilian presence will further enhance the recovery and stabilization efforts.

Finally, the extension will enable AMISOM to secure main supply routes and other routes connecting with newly recovered areas and interim regional administrations, which will ensure free access within and through the newly recovered areas, which in turn will facilitate governance and the delivery of services and humanitarian assistance. It will also enable freedom of movement and force protection for military, Government and local authorities and enable resupply and access for commercial and market traffic.

While the foregoing are noble objectives to which I am sure the Council will give its blessings, I would like to highlight some key assumptions on which these laudable objectives are premised and to which we need to give more careful consideration. If AMISOM is to achieve these objectives and if we are to make the right decisions at this crucial point in our support to Somalia, we will need to make some hard decisions regarding, in particular, first, our support to the Somalia security forces. The contribution, assumed by the Somali national army on the basis of resolution 2124 (2013), did not materialize fast enough. When it did materialize, the sustainability of the required follow-through operations was severely constrained by a combination of shortage in resources and considerable weaknesses in the chain of command. Today, the Somali authorities have developed the Guulwade (Victory) Plan, which we should all support in a coordinated manner. This is critical if we are to turn the Somali national army into a more effective partner to AMISOM.

Secondly, we will have to make a decision regarding the logistical support package to AMISOM. Although it has significantly evolved, logistical support has seen shortfalls that have been an important element among many that contributed to the lack of a sustained pace in operations. The approach in logistical support must therefore take a new direction. The planned strategic review of the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) is therefore critical and should, inter alia, recognize the need for an expansion of UNSOA's quantitative and qualitative capacities as well as the need to adapt the Support Office to the nature of AMISOM operations, as well as to its other clients.

Thirdly, the benchmarking exercise proposed two recommendations on the role of the AMISOM police component. The first is the deployment of formed police units to provide operational and logistical support and bolster the confidence of the national police force. The second is to deploy individually deployed police officers to provide support for the vetting, recruitment, training and mentoring of local Somali police personnel.

As Somalia continues to work towards establishing rule of law institutions, the Federal Government has signed memorandums of understanding with the interim regional administrations. This is a timely development, and AMISOM police will support the recruitment, vetting, training and deployment of 600 police officers for each of the administrations. The role of AMISOM police in support of Somalia necessitates the establishment of a support package for the Somali police force that comprises elementary infrastructure, rudimentary equipment and sustainment items required to commence policing operations in the regions. The final report of the benchmarking exercise jointly developed by both the AU and the United Nations will be submitted to the Security Council soon, and I look forward to the Council's consideration and endorsement of the report's recommendations.

I would like to conclude by addressing the outcomes of the independent investigations of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse allegedly perpetrated by AMISOM personnel as reported by Human Rights Watch in June 2014. As I have stated on several occasions, I would like to reiterate solemnly before Council that AMISOM's leadership is committed to enforcing the African Union's zero tolerance policy. We will continue to respect the dignity of all Somali women and girls and uphold the religious and cultural values of Somalia as AMISOM continues to implement its mandate to restore peace and stability in the country.

Beyond concluding that two of the allegations contained in the Human Rights Watch report are indeed cases of proven sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by AMISOM soldiers, the investigation team made a number of observations and recommendations to strengthen existing mechanisms that the AU Commission and the troop- and police-contributing countries to AMISOM have put in place to address sexual exploitation and abuse. These recommendations

are informing our response and we have already taken the following specific actions.

I have issued directives to the Force Commander, the Police Commissioner and other senior Mission leadership to immediately implement the recommendations contained in the investigation report. We have moved all the shops out of the AMISOM base camp. We are restructuring the camp to prevent unauthorized access by AMISOM personnel to Somalis living within the Mission area. The AU Commission has recruited and deployed a Conduct and Discipline Officer to the Mission. We are instituting a hotline in AMISOM in order to specifically respond to the challenges for victims and witnesses that were noted in the investigation report.

As a means of encouraging more reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse cases and confidence-building, the AU Commission, with input from AMISOM, has developed a whistle-blower policy that we expect will be passed by the policy organs of the AU this year. The Commission, with input from AMISOM, has also prepared a draft annex to the existing memorandum of understanding between the Commission and the troop- and police-contributing countries intended to set up a more robust response to sexual exploitation and abuse and improve prevention efforts, accountability and reporting of the troop- and police-contributing countries on sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as to ensure that victims receive the support they need.

Given that conduct and discipline is primarily a responsibility of the troop- and police-contributing countries, the Commission has shared the detailed report with those countries and requested their response and comments on the findings ahead of a meeting with them and Somalia in order to agree on the concrete steps to be taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report.

The President: I thank Ambassador Sidikou for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Prime Minister of Somalia.

Mr. Sharmarke (Somalia): There has been political change in Somalia in recent months, as Special Representative Kay and Ambassador Sidikou informed the Security Council. There has been some tangible progress, and the Federal Republic of Somalia has put forth the Gullwade (Victory) Plan designed to rapidly enhance the capacity of the Somali national army to fight Al-Shabaab alongside the African Union Mission in Somalia, in order to respond to the call to make the Somali national army more effective in joint operations. I urge our partners to support this plan so as to enable the army to then assume more responsibility to secure the country.

A crucial component of the plan and the delivery of Somalia's defence sector is the process of integrating regional militias into the Somali army. With the beginning of the operation of the National Integration Commission, under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence, on 12 May, we will now begin to see some real momentum and tangible progress in this priority area. The agreed allocation of regional Mission forces to be transferred to the Somali national army indicates a clear and strong commitment on the part of regional organizations to embrace the federalization of our armed forces. This is related to the integration of 2,880 from Jubbaland, where Al-Shabaab still maintains several strongholds. As I speak, the Defence Minister is in Jubbaland to kick-tart the integration process.

Another pressing priority is the integration of 3,000 militia personnel allocated from Puntland. The Puntland forces are already fighting Al-Shabaab, which has established another stronghold in the Galgala Mountains, following the pressure of the military campaign in south-west Somalia last year. Puntland is expected to be the ultimate theatre of fighting against Al-Shabaab due to the difficult terrain, which provides shelter for the group shelter. We need to defeat Al-Shabaab and to prevent it from consolidating and spreading its presence in Puntland, before the situation becomes too serious to handle.

The Al-Shabaab threat in Puntland is heightened by the events unfolding in Yemen. If extremist elements come and take root in Puntland together with Al-Shabaab, it will be very difficult to dislodge and defeat them in future. We have a window to address this situation now. I therefore appeal to the Security Council to authorize the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia to extend a non-lethal support package to the additional 3,000 personnel from Puntland, earmarked for the integration of the Somali national army. That would bring the total number of army troops benefiting from the United Nations support package to 13,900.

Looking ahead, it is also vital that we incorporate into this process the integration of regional police forces. That will play a central role in accelerating the

transition to policing piracy, at the federal and regional levels alike, which we all know is essential to long-term stability in Somalia.

On the political front, Vision 2016 remains the policy framework that encapsulates our political objectives. There has been progress in moving ahead with the process in the central regions, and the federal structures are taking shape quite rapidly. The last remaining state, Hiiraan state, is about to be kick-started in the next week or so.

The Federal Government is also continuing to engage regional leaders. At our last meeting in Garoowe, progress was made in the constitutional review process, including the security sector, power- and work-sharing and the issue of force integration. Federal and state leaders agreed to establish a committee to review work-sharing arrangements and to move forward on the constitutional review process.

Progress under the New Deal Compact has been quite positive. On 2 April, and a concessional facility approved in principle six joint projects to be implemented by the Federal Government of Somalia and six organizations with the support channelled through the United Nations or through partner transfers. This is a crucial step towards unlocking resources and accelerating the delivery of tangible results.

In May 2015, the Council of Ministers nominated members of the National Independent Electoral Commission, the Judicial Service Commission and the Boundary Commission. The operationalization of these Commissions is a top priority for the Federal Government, and we expect the Federal Parliament to endorse them very soon.

Efforts to establish new structures in the regions are progressing. A reconciliation conference is ongoing. Planning has begun for the organization process towards cooperation of federal states in the last remaining state.

The establishment of the Jubbaland Parliament was a welcome development. However, there have been some issues that arose from the process. The Federal Government is working closely with the Internal Jubba Organization and opposition leaders to find compromise and accommodations to solve the crisis over the formation of the Jubbaland regional assembly.

Last but not least, the Federal Government is working very closely on repatriation with Kenya so as to have an orderly return of our refugees from the Dadaab camp. We are also working with authorities in Yemen to assist the swift process of refugee returns to Somalia. We are faced with a situation that is of great concern to the United Nations and all parties in the region: that of dealing with the human cost of the violence in Yemen. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees expects 100,000 refugees from Yemen in Somalia over the coming six months. Somalia is already home to approximately 1 million internally displaced persons. We do not have the internal resources or the capacity to absorb additional refugees. We therefore appeal to the Council to mobilize the United Nations system and donors so as to develop a contingency plan on the ground for the refugees fleeing from Yemen.

I thank the Council for this opportunity to address it and I hope that it will consider our appeals.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7446

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7446th meeting
Tuesday, 19 May 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-14512 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: I am honoured indeed to address the Security Council in my new capacity as the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority.

At the outset, allow me to thank President Abbas and his Government for their warm welcome and genuine interest in working with the United Nations in advancing the just cause of peace. I would like to also express my gratitude to the Government of Israel for its warm reception and for engaging on a host of important issues related to the situation on the ground. Since taking up my assignment, I have engaged with Palestinian and Israeli leaders. I have also met with political, civil society and business stakeholders in the West Bank and Gaza and with key partners in Egypt and Jordan in order to begin developing a better understanding of the reality on the ground and the prospects for the future.

The Middle East faces a vicious tide of terror and extremism that presents a serious challenge not just to the region, but also to international peace and security. However, the inability to respond for over 60 years now, both to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a State and to Israel's quest for security, has fuelled a situation that is becoming more dangerous by the day. Generations of Palestinians and Israelis have come to realize that sustainable and just peace cannot be reached through conflict, but must be the result of negotiations. Thousands of people have died so that today we may hold this truth — that peace cannot be achieved through violence, but at the negotiating table — to be self-evident.

This hard-earned belief in peace and negotiations must not be allowed to wither away. If it does, it could further destabilize the Middle East for decades. To save it, to give hope back to people, we must act to advance the prospect of a two-State solution: Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. How to do this is not an academic question, but one that must be addressed by the parties on the ground, the international community and the United Nations as well.

I do not underestimate the difficult decisions that both parties will have to take. Nor should we underestimate the domestic challenges that Israeli and Palestinian leaders alike will have to overcome. The region is facing a complicated security threat. However, it is precisely because of the dangers that lurk in the Middle East today that both sides must show historic leadership and personal commitment to peace and negotiations.

I take this opportunity to call on the new Government of Israel to take credible steps, including a freeze of settlement activity, in order to promote the resumption of meaningful negotiations. Continued security cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli authorities remains a cornerstone of a peaceful resolution. Both parties must make every effort to build upon existing agreements, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, in order to gain momentum towards a final status agreement.√The Secretary-General stands ready to work with all in order to encourage a return to negotiations on the basis of an agreed framework.

On 14 May, the Israeli Knesset confirmed Prime Minister Netanyahu's new coalition Government. Its guidelines state that it will "strive for peace with the Palestinians and all our neighbours, while safeguarding the security, historical and national interests of Israel".

The Secretary-General and I will be engaging with the new Government to explore realistic options for a return to meaningful negotiations towards a two-State solution within a reasonable time frame. However, this goal is increasingly threatened by actions on the ground that exacerbate the divisions that exist between the two sides.

We are deeply concerned to see the advancement of settlement activities in East Jerusalem and the West

Bank on three occasions in the past month. On 14 May, tenders were issued for 85 housing units in Givat Ze'ev, south of Ramallah. On 6 May, the District Planning and Building Committee approved permits for 400 new residential units in the settlement of Ramat Shlomo, and, on 27 April, 77 tenders were issued for residential units in two other East Jerusalem settlements.

These announcements come at a sensitive time in which the international community is looking to Israel to demonstrate its readiness to engage with the Palestinians on building peace. There should be no illusions about the impact of these unilateral actions. They not only undermine the collective hopes of those longing for a just resolution of the conflict, but they again call into question the viability of achieving peace based on the vision of two States. Settlement activity is illegal under international law, and I urge the new Israeli Government to reverse these decisions and refrain from such action in future.

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, tensions continued as Israeli security forces conducted some 265 search-and-arrest operations, resulting in the arrests of 294 Palestinians. In separate incidents in late April, three Palestinian men, including a 17-year-old boy, were shot and killed after reportedly stabbing and injuring Israeli security officers at checkpoints in Hebron and Ma'ale Adumin. On 25 April, a Palestinian man was suspected of intentionally ramming his car into a group of Israeli policemen in East Jerusalem, injuring four. On 11 May, an Israeli was injured in a reported stabbing attack near a West Bank checkpoint. And on 14 May, three Israeli youths were struck by a car driven by a Palestinian man close to Gush Etzion.

Despite repeated objections, the Israeli Government continues to demolish Palestinian homes and structures. During the reporting period, a total of 15 structures, which contained 33 residences, were demolished, leading to the displacement of 25 people, including 14 children. On 4 May, the Israeli High Court of Justice rejected a request by Palestinians from the Area C village of Susiya to freeze demolitions in the village. And on 10 May, an Israeli court ordered the demolition of eight buildings in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Semiramis. The United Nations once again urges Israel to cease such demolitions and displacements.

The United Nations also remains concerned about the recent moves to relocate Bedouin communities near Abu Nwar in the politically sensitive E1 area of the West Bank that may be linked to further settlement construction.

Turning to Gaza, I cannot but recall the shock of my first, very brief tour of the destruction of the Shujaiya neighbourhood. No one — I repeat, no one — can remain untouched by the scale of devastation, the slow pace of reconstruction, and the vast needs that exist in order to rebuild lives and livelihoods. Gaza is desperate and Gaza is angry: angry at the blockade; angry at the closure of the Rafah crossing; angry at Hamas, including for imposing an illegal "solidarity tax"; angry at the donors for not honouring their commitments to reconstruction — at everyone. There is a clear moral and humanitarian imperative not just for the United Nations and the international community, but primarily for the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities to prevent the implosion of Gaza. I particularly call on the factions on the ground to ensure that Gaza remains peaceful.

Despite the fact that the agreed ceasefire, brokered by Egypt, continues to hold, some security incidents have persisted during the reporting period. Three rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza on 23 April: one exploded in an open area in Israel and the other two fell short and exploded inside Gaza. On 3 May, militants fired another rocket which hit inside Gaza near the security fence, and Palestinian militants also test-fired 19 rockets at the sea. Thankfully, no injuries or damage were reported in any of these incidents, all of which we condemn.

In response to the rocket firing, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted an airstrike in Gaza that damaged a Hamas military site, but no casualties were reported. The IDF also reportedly shot and injured nine Palestinians in Gaza: three fishermen whose boats were fired upon by the Israeli navy and six Palestinians shot while approaching the Gaza border fence. Three militants were also killed in separate incidents where smuggling tunnels collapsed.

Without genuine Palestinian reconciliation and unity, all efforts to improve the situation in Gaza will face major difficulties. On 19 April, a delegation of Palestinian ministers travelled to Gaza to begin a process to reintegrate public-sector employees, tens of thousands of whom have not received salaries for over a year. Discussions, however, broke down the following day.

Despite this setback, I welcome the determination of Prime Minister Hamdallah and his efforts to find a

solution to the problem of public-sector employees in Gaza. His commitment that no one will be left behind is an important guarantee. I encourage all factions to support these efforts. The United Nations also stands ready to work with all stakeholders and support the Government in mobilizing the necessary resources for this process.

A comprehensive reconciliation must include the Government of national consensus resuming control over the crossings of Gaza into Israel and Egypt. This is key to allowing more movement of goods and people and to the eventual reopening of the crossings. The responsibility for addressing these issues lies first and foremost with the Palestinian authorities. But it also rests partly with the United Nations and the international community, which must empower the Government to take up its leadership role in Gaza, including through the fulfilment of the donor pledges made in Cairo last October.

What is clear is that no approach that divides Gaza and the West Bank should be supported. Palestine is one, and the United Nations will work with determination to advance unity through its legitimate institutions.

The ultimate objective of the United Nations in Gaza is to see the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). In the absence of such a fundamental change, the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism is the only option currently available to facilitate the entry of material and to enable the implementation of large-scale projects that can bring reconstruction, jobs and stability.

I can report that, as at 19 May, close to 85,000 of the 100,000 households in need of construction materials to repair their homes had received them. In addition, 85 of the 167 projects submitted and funded by the international community and the private sector have been approved; eight of those projects are currently under way.

All of these developments are positive but far from sufficient to address Gaza's reconstruction needs. The United Nations is working closely with the Israeli Ministry of Defence's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, the Palestinian Minister of Civil Affairs and donors to finalize arrangements to speed up reconstruction. I take this opportunity to thank all counterparts for their constructive engagement on these matters.

Turning briefly to Lebanon, Special Coordinator Kaag and members of the International Support Group for Lebanon met today in Beirut with Prime Minister Tammam Salam to discuss the current situation in the country. As of 25 May, the country will have been without a president for one year. This vacuum undermines Lebanon's ability to address the challenges it faces and jeopardizes the functioning of State institutions. Members of Parliament should fulfil their constitutional obligation to elect a President without further delay.

With almost 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon forming the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world, we again call on the international community to urgently fulfil existing pledges and increase and expedite support to Lebanon as a matter of priority. It is important that the Government and United Nations counterparts work together to promote effective management of the refugee presence in line with international humanitarian and human rights law.

The Lebanese-Syrian border remains impacted by incidents and infiltration attempts by armed extremist groups, particularly as a result of the fighting in the Qalamoun region. The Lebanese Armed Forces have made considerable efforts to secure the border, with support from the international community. On 20 April, Lebanon received its first shipment of military equipment from France, financed by a $3 billion grant from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This and other contributions by Member States are both necessary and welcome.

The area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained generally calm despite the volatile situation in the Golan Heights. In their ongoing engagement with UNIFIL, both parties maintained their commitment to the cessation of hostilities and to the stability of the Blue Line. Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace continued on an almost daily basis.

On the Golan, clashes occurred between the Syrian armed forces and armed members of the opposition, as did heavy fighting between the different armed groups in the area of separation. Between 24 April and 5 May, fire from the Bravo side as a result of such fighting impacted across the ceasefire line. On 24 April, an Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) missile-launching unit fired four missiles eastwards, one of which crossed the ceasefire line. A couple of days later, the IDF informed

the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force that four persons carrying equipment had crossed the ceasefire line from the Bravo side and had been killed by Israeli security forces as they approached the technical fence. Those developments have the potential to heighten tensions and jeopardize the ceasefire between the two countries.

In conclusion, let me return briefly to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as the coming period will be critical to the future of the peace process. The United Nations has repeatedly warned that maintaining the status quo is not tenable. It will inexorably lead to the continued erosion of living conditions for Palestinians and Israelis alike, and it will undermine the security and stability of all. My introductory meetings clearly demonstrated that, despite the prolonged absence of a political horizon, the sometimes poisonous rhetoric of incitement and the destructive actions of those seeking to undermine a return to talks, there remains a steadfast desire and determination to achieve an enduring agreement. Any resolution will require a comprehensive regional solution — conceivably with support from the reinvigorated Quartet — that includes greater engagement with key Arab states. However, while the international community has a critical responsibility to support a peace process, a lasting solution can be achieved only by the parties themselves.

I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to address the Council. I look forward to working with you, and to your guidance on the way forward. Allow me to place on record my gratitude to my predecessor, Robert Serry, for his tireless efforts in this position. I also want to thank the excellent team at the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and here in the Secretariat, without whom our work in the field would not be possible.

The President: I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7447

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7447th meeting
Friday, 22 May 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-14986 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2015/289)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Palau, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/333, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Malta, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2015/289, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Lithuania.

The draft resolution before colleagues today is the product of months of work by our Permanent Mission, which culminated in week-long intensive negotiations among the 15 members of the Security Council, as well as multiple bilateral exchanges. I thank all those who helped and guided us along the way, and the Council members for their cooperation in producing this far-reaching text. We appreciate the comments and criticisms received, which we view as an important part of the broader debate on small arms and light weapons. Critical thinking and good-faith engagement are in order to be able to advance in our common efforts aimed at reducing and limiting the horrendous human cost of the uncontrolled illegal spread of small arms and light weapons around the world. We value the strong support for the draft resolution that many delegations expressed during the open debate last week (see S/PV.7442), and we appreciate having so many co-sponsors to the draft resolution.

As we submit the draft resolution to the vote, we bear in mind the passionate call from Karamoko Diakité, an arms control activist from West Africa, not to let down the victims of armed conflicts and to adopt the draft resolution. He spoke from the depth of his personal experience and spoke of the personal experiences and suffering of countless others for whom the impact of illicit arms flows on their faiths and hopes, as well as the faiths and hopes of their kin, is not just a matter of wording, but of the very real harm, the crippling injuries and the deaths that they have suffered, which will continue to haunt them as long as they live.

The draft resolution is not ideal, but the world we live in is not ideal either. In the real world, we work painstakingly to achieve the desired results, with perseverance, patience, laborious efforts and compromise, one step at a time, bit by bit, piece by piece, block by block. For all our posturing, the illicit transfer of arms will continue, as arms trade is one of the most lucrative businesses in the world; but we can, and we must, do all within our power to limit the damaging, even mortal effect of such illicit flows on civilian populations.

We have the responsibility to protect as best we can. That is what we sought to do, to build on the excellent Australian resolution adopted in 2013 (resolution 2117 (2013)) by adding new operational impact-oriented elements. Those much-needed bits and pieces were the foundation on which the small arms and light weapons discourse and action can, and, I hope, will continue to

be built in the Council. Let me go through some of the new elements in the text before the Council.

The draft resolution contains important new language on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), that landmark instrument we have so painstakingly and passionately negotiated over an extensive period of time. Had we taken an all-or-nothing approach, we would not have the ATT today, and the world would be worse off because of that.

The draft resolution has a very strong focus on the human costs of the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons and on the need to protect the victims, women, children and other vulnerable groups. It also speaks clearly on the critical role of women in tackling the problem of small arms and light weapons. It requests more specific reporting by the Secretary-General on the impact on specific vulnerable groups, including children, with recommendations for action to be taken to counter the impact of the illicit spread of small arms.

The draft resolution includes extensive new provisions on assistance to affected countries and calls on new entities to identify capacities that could contribute to countering the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. It encourages the United Nations system to act in a more coherent fashion in helping those States, including through assisting weapons collection, enhancing physical security and stockpile management practices; safe and effective management, storage, marking, record-keeping and tracing of stockpiles of small arms and light weapons; as well as the collection and destruction of surplus seized, unmarked or illicitly held weapons and ammunition; and the development of national export and import control systems. It emphasizes the need to strengthen border security, judicial institutions and law enforcement capacity, and calls for examining and facilitating the transfer of technologies that would improve the tracing and detection of illicit transfers in small arms and light weapons, as well as for greater transparency in small arms transfers.

As Boko Haram, Da'esh and their likes burn, kill, enslave and rape with the help of small arms, the draft resolution contains concrete language on the threat of terrorist groups and calls on the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, its monitoring team, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate to engage on the threat of weapons in the hands of terrorists and to develop plans of assistance to countries in need. All of these and other new elements could have a tangible impact on tackling the illicit small arms problem, and if implemented, could make a difference to countless people trapped in conflicts.

Let me be very clear: contrary to some allegations, none of these elements in the draft impinge upon or violate State sovereignty. My own country has fought hard and long for sovereignty and would do everything to protect it again and again, and we know very well that all of us around this table and at the United Nations feel strongly about sovereignty as well. The real threat to national sovereignty and all the core rules and norms that govern nations and human lives comes from the action by terrorists, illegal armed groups, militant mercenaries, transborder organized crime, traffickers and smugglers of all stripes, who slaughter, burn, rape and destroy without borders — and definitely not from the language of this draft resolution, which is aimed at seeking greater coherence within the United Nations system in order to better help countries to counter the problem of illicit arms. The draft text clearly stipulates that all measures would be implemented only as appropriate, within existing mandates and as requested by affected countries.

Every minute, as we speak, a life is lost because of the illicit trade or misuse of small arms and light weapons. Besides causing deaths and injuries, such illicit flows facilitate the commission of hideous human rights abuses and atrocities and indirectly impede development and growth. The all-too-free access to small arms strikes at the core of the human rights of women and girls. Every day, whether in war-ravaged villages or in displacement and refugee camps, women in conflict situations are faced with impossible choices that none of us would ever want to make — to let their children starve or to venture out in the streets, camps or fields in search of whatever meager edibles they can find and other necessities, all of this at the risk of being caught in the crossfire, hit by a stray bullet, beaten, robbed or raped at gunpoint.

For many women and girls, even attending to their basic bodily needs on the edge of a camp can be literally a matter of life and death. As members prepare to vote, I ask that they think of the mothers who would live in continuous fear that rebels, terrorists or militant gangs will attack their homes and steal, rape or kidnap their children, or sell into slavery their daughters. Think of the displaced, of religious minorities running for their lives, of the elderly and the disabled who simply cannot

run. Think of the children as young as six or eight, barely able to hold a gun, scared, brainwashed and forced to maim, torture and kill in order to live.

We have heard the heartrending testimonies of former child soldiers in the Council. We cannot be so callous as to ignore them. Think of the humanitarian workers and doctors who risk and lose their own lives in order to help those in need. Think of the journalists who brave the worst crises to keep us informed. Think of the peacekeepers being attacked and shot as they perform a much-needed protection mission. Think of all those human beings — fellow human beings — about to be killed, abused, injured, reduced to slavery, treated like animals in captivity by warlords, terrorists and militant gangs.

This draft resolution has been drafted not to resolve all the underlying disputes on the arms trade, but to make a difference to those desperately in need, to enable specific and concrete actions aimed at limiting the damage and reducing the human costs caused by the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons. The victims cannot defend themselves, but we can. The choice to take the side of the victims is ours to make, and I hope we all do.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Angola, Chad, China, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The President: There were nine votes in favour, none against and six abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2220 (2015).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Allow me to make this statement on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council, namely, Angola, Chad and Nigeria. The African group also associates itself with the contents of the present resolution and vote.

Let me begin by acknowledging the efforts deployed by the Lithuanian presidency and by you, Madam President, with a view to reaching consensus on this critical resolution. We note the advancements the resolution provides by focusing on the human cost of small arms. This morning, you, Madam, emphatically referred to that focus, particularly with regard to civilians, women and children; on the devastating impact on development, education and health; and on conflict prevention and avoiding relapse into conflict. We also note the advancement in positioning the United Nations to better support arms embargoes and other international obligations, such as Security Council support for the Arms Trade Treaty.

Although, in our view, this resolution should, above all, contribute to bringing about a lasting solution to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons — namely, to theatres of instability and conflict, including a halt to the supply of those weapons to non-State actors — unfortunately, our proposals and concerns regarding the issue of proliferation and access to small arms and light weapons to non-State actors were not sufficiently considered in the resolution. Together with other members of the Council, we made considerable efforts to address this daunting challenge to the African continent, namely, the indiscriminate supply and illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which are fuelling the spread of several conflicts in Africa and the world.

Eleven years ago, by adopting resolution 1540 (2004), the Council clearly defined the concept of non-State actors in a particular context. Currently, our main concern relates to non-State actors to whom small arms and light weapons are supplied to fuel conflicts, destabilize countries and promote policies of regime-change, with the tragic consequences we are witnessing today where despicable crimes against humanity are committed.

As a country that has gone through a very painful experience, it would be politically unacceptable not to seize the opportunity that the discussion of this resolution provides to address the problem of the supply of weapons to non-State actors. Our position of non-support of the resolution is based on the assumption that the illicit supply of weapons to non-State actors amounts to a threat to international peace and security,

which the Council must consistently address. Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab; militias in Libya, Syria and Iraq; insurgents in Mali, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and other countries; and the non-State actors to whom large amounts of weapons have been supplied, which are out of control, are the main promoters of terrorism, instability and armed conflict in many parts of the world.

In the search for a compromise during the negotiation of the resolution, we accepted a definition mentioning non-State actors as terrorists, armed groups and criminal networks. Additionally, we proposed to explicitly mention in the resolution the exemption of armed private contractors and others similarly engaged in carrying out security missions. Unfortunately, all these efforts were to no avail.

Finally, Madam President, we remain engaged with you and other members of the Council with regard to the adoption of a resolution that would deal with the problem of the spread of small arms and light weapons, and would not leave such an important question unresolved for the future.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Chad endorses the statement made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group, including the African members of the Security Council.

Chad notes with regret that a resolution as important as the one just voted upon by nine members of the Security Council (resolution 2220 (2015)), whose aim, we were told, is to help the most affected regions by the destabilizing impact of small arms and light weapons, more specifically Africa, was adopted without involving the representatives of the continent in th Council. For the African countries in general, and Chad in particular, the major challenge to be taken up in combating the use, that is to say, the abusive and illegal use of small arms and light weapons, remains the issue of the illicit transfer of these arms to non-State actors, including, inter alia, armed groups, terrorists and criminal networks.

The concept of non-State actors has been defined by the Security Council through resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Ironically, when it comes to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit transfer to non-State actors, the reference to these concepts gives rise to great opposition from certain prominent members of the Council. Non-State actors, illegally supplied with arms and munitions, provoke conflicts and destabilize States, commit egregious crimes and human rights violations, sow destruction and plunge civilian populations into desolation, thereby jeopardizing any prospects of development for the States concerned. Therefore, for us in Chad, the refusal to include a provision in this resolution that would make it illegal to transfer small arms and light weapons to non-State actors is tantamount to a refusal to prevent crises and conflicts and tantamount to encouraging destabilizing efforts against fragile States.

Throughout the discussions on the draft text leading up to today's vote, the African delegations showed great flexibility by submitting various proposed amendments with a view to having a balanced consensual text that would accommodate all the concerns of all members of the Council. Unfortunately, these valid concerns, such as expressed by us, did not attract even the slightest attention from those who rejected them with some degree of condescension. We are deeply disappointed and shocked.

Nothing is more frustrating than when it comes to issues as important as those concerning Africa, the African members of the Council are marginalized and the only reason given is that their concerns have no impact on the adoption of the resolution. This historical injustice must be remedied through a reform of the Security Council, such that Africa can take its rightful place in the Council, alongside other continents, and that it can make its voice heard. Given the categorical refusal to take our concerns on board and in the absence of any possibility of dialogue on subjects as sensitive as these, Chad had no choice but to abstain in the voting on this resolution.

Either way, convinced of the justice of our cause and the relevance of our arguments ,we insist on the importance of and need to find a solution to the illicit transfer to small arms and light weapons to non-State actors. We will continue our efforts until we can make our voices heard.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): With regard to resolution 2220 (2015), which the Council has just adopted, Malaysia places high hopes on the Council being able to reach consensus on this important issue. The statement that you made before the voting, Madam President, clearly amplified why this resolution is needed. However, we also recognize that Council members will have to redouble their efforts to further

refine an approach that can take the parameters of this technical issue into consideration. Malaysia was pleased to participate in our constructive discussions, and we would like to congratulate Lithuania and you personally, Madam President, for your leadership in our collective endeavour.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Lithuanian delegation for preparing today's resolution 2220 (2015), on the illicit trade and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons, and to commend your and your colleagues' unflagging efforts, Madam President, to arrive at a text that is both ambitious and pragmatic. We welcome the text's adoption and the fact that it obtained the sponsorship of more than 50 Member States, proof of the international community's support for this vital cause.

France voted in favour of the resolution for several reasons. It reflects an important initiative, first introduced in the Security Council two years ago by Australia, on the threat posed by the trafficking and spread of small arms. For the first time the Council considered this scourge through a cross-cutting approach, leading to our adoption of resolution 2117 (2013), which has been a reference text on the subject ever since.

The new resolution's provisions put civilians and their protection at its core, because, of course, it is civilian populations, particularly women and children, who are the first victims of the proliferation of such weapons. They are responsible for nearly half a million deaths a year and remain by far the world's deadliest. The resolution also highlights the role of the United Nations in implementing the Arms Trade Treaty, which marks a historic step forward and will help to strengthen international peace and security. The ability of the United Nations to act could not be allowed to fall behind. The resolution also addresses the flow of small arms that benefits armed groups, criminal networks and terrorist groups that take advantage of the lack of regulation in the area to continue their barbaric and destabilizing activities all over the world, particularly in Africa.

Lastly, today's resolution is designed to integrate the fight against the illicit trade in small arms into every aspect of United Nations action, for which we had to mobilize not only the sanctions committees and the expert groups responsible for monitoring embargoes but also, when necessary and appropriate, our peacekeeping and special political missions. Of course, the United Nations architecture for combating terrorism also has a role to play. We hope the issue of small-arms trafficking will be systematically taken into account in the analyses of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Monitoring Team of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011), concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities.

Madam President, during the negotiations you took the time to hear the views of every member of the Council, and I would once again like to pay tribute to you and your team for all your efforts. We would of course have preferred the text to be more ambitious in some respects, such as on the protection of civilians, and in recognizing the achievements of the Arms Trade Treaty. But a resolution is of necessity the result of compromise, and today's is ultimately a demanding one that we are convinced will advance the Organization's ability to fight the deadly scourge of the illicit trade in small arms.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of today's important resolution 2220 (2015). We thank Lithuania for the leadership and tenacity it has shown on the issue, with efforts that build innovatively on resolution 2117 (2013), which was the Council's first on small arms and light weapons.

Today marks a substantial step forward in the saving of lives from the scourge of small arms and light weapons, and four elements of today's resolution deserve particular attention. The first is its review of the work of the United Nations departments and entities that address the issue of small arms and light weapons. Second is the concrete proposals it makes for increasing those bodies' effectiveness in future. Third is the important recognition in the text of the disproportionate impact that such weapons have on women and children, and fourth is its further acknowledgement of the positive impact of the Arms Trade Treaty. On that point, the United Kingdom maintains that the Treaty is the most effective international tool for creating a responsible and secure international trade in these weapons, and we once again urge all States to support and accede to the Treaty.

Finally, we regret the fact that several Council members found themselves unable to support today's resolution. For decades, global policy on conventional weapons has focused on the obligations and responsible

behaviour of exporting and importing States. That is the best way to moderate illicit transfers and proliferation. Contrary to some arguments, we do not think that ill-defined and practically unenforceable new statements by the Council on the subject of non-State actors can in any way improve the situation on the ground. Despite those disagreements, however, we urge all Member States to focus on the overall value of today's resolution, which offers tangible actions for addressing the scourge of small arms and light weapons across all regions of the world, particularly in Africa.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile voted in favour of today's resolution 2220 (2015) in an expression of my country's ongoing commitment to disarmament in every form and to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe the work of the Security Council can be enriched through an ongoing dialogue on the impact of illicit transfers of such weapons on international security and on the foundation provided by the Arms Trade Treaty of 2013. The resolution we have just adopted marks a step forward from the previous Security Council resolution on the subject, resolution 2117 (2013). The text also contains substantive language on women and peace and security in line with resolution 1325 (2000) and other related resolutions, and with article 7, paragraph 4, of the Arms Trade Treaty, supported by Chile.

We regret the fact that the resolution does not include a reference to the impact produced by illicit transfers in arms and ammunition to non-State actors and unauthorized groups. That issue should be addressed, given the negative effects of the cross-border actions of many non-State actors, which have major repercussions for civilian populations and for international peace and security.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation shares the growing concern about the problem of the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that combating it requires a coordinated effort on the part of the international community while at the same time maintaining the central role of the United Nations. However, the Russian Federation abstained in the voting on today's resolution on small arms and light weapons (resolution 2220 (2015)), and we would like to explain our reasons.

We firmly believe that strengthening national controls in this area would enable us to significantly reduce the risk of the uncontrolled proliferation of such weapons. That was why during the work on the text of the resolution we proposed adding a number of concrete measures, including a ban on deliveries of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized entities in recipient States, the strict regulation of brokering activities and a ban on the unauthorized re-export of arms and on the production of pirated weapons manufactured without licences or under expired licences. Our amendments were not included.

The resolution includes a number of questionable provisions relating to the expansion of the power of specialized committees and missions of the United Nations concerning issues of control over transfers of small arms and light weapons. In our view, the primary responsibility for carrying out those functions within national territorial frontiers should lie with the Government concerned.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): New Zealand has supported today's resolution 2220 (2015) in both its concept and its details since Lithuania first proposed it. We see the resolution as important because of the gains it makes in an area too little discussed by the Security Council. We thank Lithuania for taking forward the initiative initially taken by Australia in resolution 2117 (2013).

As the President has enumerated, the resolution operationalizes small arms in many facets of the Council's work and encourages wider adherence to the Arms Trade Treaty, one of the most important arms control treaties adopted in recent years. The resolution will also ensure that small arms have more than a temporary place on the Security Council agenda.

Sadly, over the last week the issue of small arms and light weapons itself has become secondary to a highly politicized debate. We have some sympathy for the position of the three African States that wanted an explicit reference to transfers to non-State actors. New Zealand does not support the illicit transfer of arms to non-State criminal and armed groups. We could have accepted any of the formulations under discussion. We believe that a solution could have been found if delegations on both sides of the debate had focused on the words on the page and had taken a less positional approach to the negotiations. We are pleased nonetheless that the resolution has been adopted with the sponsorship of a wide range of Members of the Organization.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela abstained in the voting on resolution 2220 (2015) despite the efforts made by Lithuania in leading the negotiations.

Venezuela participated actively and constructively in the process. We believe that the resolution has some positive but weak elements with respect to establishing clear objectives for lifting arms embargoes and providing for international cooperation, including in the areas of technology transfer, the management and control of stockpiles, marking and tracing, and the collection and destruction of stockpiles. However, we regret that we did not take into account the position of many countries in the discussion on the urgent need to prohibit the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors, whose definition is clearly established to achieve the purposes set forth in resolution 1540 (2004), as well as the prohibition of the unauthorized re-export or the sale of these weapons without a licence or with an expired licence.

The seriousness of the problem of the illicit trafficking in weapons is reflected in the alarming statistics presented by certain sources, which estimate that at least 875 million of these weapons are available, many of them in the hands of private individuals and non-State actors. It is believed that between 7 and 8 million such weapons are produced each year. Furthermore, legal international sales of such weapons account for at least $8.5 billion annually. In addition, according to the World Bank, the illicit sale of such arms could account for an additional 20 percent of that figure.

Therefore, the resolution that the Council has approved has limited effectiveness because it fails to provide for measures to prevent hundreds of thousands of small arms and light weapons, including heavy machine guns, grenade launchers, ground-to-air missiles and portable air-defence systems, inter alia, continue to stoke conflicts in Africa and the Middle East.

Finally, in future, we would like to see greater openness on the part of those Member States that have opposed measures designed to prevent the illicit transfer of small and light weapons to non-State actors, because this continues to propagate violence in many regions throughout the world.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons exacerbates regional armed conflicts, worsens regional tension, fosters terrorism and transnational organized crime and causes bodily harm and death to innocent civilians. Tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is of great significance for maintaining regional peace and stability and promoting the normal socioeconomic development of the countries concerned.

The Chinese Government has always been firmly opposed to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Security Council should play an active role in further strengthening the efforts of the international community in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In the current situation, more than ever, the international community needs a Security Council resolution that can comprehensively and effectively combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The Chinese delegation took part in consultations on resolution 2220 (2015) in a positive and constructive spirit. During the consultations, some members, in particular the three African members, proposed some important, legitimate and highly valid amendments. The consultations should have further heeded the views of all sides and sought to solve differences so as to reach a text that could enjoy the unanimous support of the whole Council. It is regrettable that the relevant amendments have not been fully reflected in the text. In the light of the situation, China abstained in the voting on resolution 2220 (2015).

Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain supported and co-sponsored resolution 2220 (2015) and thanks the delegation of Lithuania for presenting it and for its tireless work leading to the adoption of a timely and positive text. The text is a good complement to resolution 2117 (2013) and keeps the issue on the Security Council's agenda. We view positively the references to the control of arms transfers to terrorist groups and criminal networks, to the protection of civilians and to issues of women and peace and security. We also see as very timely references to the Arms Trade Treaty, which is and has been the most important step taken in disarmament in recent years.

The resolution incorporates practical measures aimed at improving the control of the illicit arms trafficking, management, stockpiling and proper

destruction of stockpiles. We have see the image of the soldier laying down his rifle contained in the tapestry hanging in this Chamber as symbolic of the Security Council's work in the fight to free the world from the threat of weapons, specifically small arms and light weapons. We have taken a step in that direction today.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): We adopt resolution 2220 (2015) today, almost two years after the Security Council adopted the first-ever Security Council resolution on small arms and light weapons (resolution 2117 (2013). It is a pioneering text, and we should all support it. The new elements of the resolution will help mitigate the misuse of these weapons and ultimately advance international peace and security. It will not change the world, but it will help shape our collective approach to the issue, and over time this will make a difference.

The resolution will improve the work of the United Nations to protect refugees, internally displaced persons, and women, children and vulnerable groups from the misuse of small arms and light weapons. It will enhance the international community's monitoring of and compliance with arms embargoes in relation to these weapons. It will improve how disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes take into account the effects of small arms and light weapons and it broadens the focus of the United Nations in making recommendations to address the impact of these weapons, specifically on children in armed conflict.

The resolution encourages the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to provide recommendations for actions to enhance the response to threats from terrorist access to small arms and light weapons. It encourages the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to provide plans to facilitate assistance and strengthen Member States' capacities to respond to the illicit trafficking in and the misuse of these weapons, and it makes clear the importance of the Arms Trade Treaty, among other key international instruments.

Yet despite all of the new, positive and helpful provisions in the text, it is troubling that some Council members were unable to support it and risked derailing it for an ulterior political objective. The resolution recognizes

> "the importance of preventing the illicit transfers and sales of weapons and ammunition, including small arms and light weapons, to armed groups and criminal networks that target civilians and civilian objects" (*resolution 2220 (2015), para. 20*).

It also emphasizes that

> "the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons can aid terrorism and illegal armed groups and facilitate increasing levels of transnational organized crime" (*ibid., eighteenth preambular para.*).

Furthermore, in the resolution, the Council reaffirms

> "its decision that States shall eliminate the supply of weapons, including small arms and light weapons, to terrorists" (*ibid., para. 19*).

Despite the clear language and several significant compromises, a few Council members demanded that certain terms be used that have absolutely no precedent in the Council's prior resolutions on small arms and light weapons. We are disappointed that a few Council members would be willing to throw out a resolution that they almost entirely agree with and that they know will make a positive contribution in their own countries in order to cling to one specific term for political purposes, a term that is ill-defined and which no delegation in our negotiations had been able to identify any specific entity that they would wish covered that is not already covered by the language in the text.

A good measure of the global support that the resolution enjoys can be found in the fact that 56 Member States that co-sponsored it. In that context, we are pleased that the resolution was adopted. The United States supports it and looks forward to cooperating with all Member States to implement it.

The President: There are no more speakers on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7448

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7448th meeting
Tuesday, 26 May 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Davison
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2015/303)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-15113 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2015/303)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hashim Thaçi to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/303, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zarif.

Mr. Zarif: The first quarter of this year has been an important one for Kosovo and for the South-East European region. I wish to begin by commending the new Pristina Government for its prudent and reasoned approach to tackling the many inherited and new challenges it faces and for its ambitious reform agenda.

Both Belgrade and Pristina stand at important stages along their respective European paths. Their demonstrated ability to work together on subjects of common concern has been of fundamental importance in overcoming the legacy of hostility and conflict. An equally encouraging fact is that, over the recent months, there have been increasing direct contacts at the local level, alongside the European Union-facilitated dialogue at the higher political level.

Two meetings between Prime Minister Vučić of Serbia and Kosovo's new Prime Minister Mustafa, held on 9 February and 21 April in the framework of the Brussels dialogue, were further important milestones that will, we hope, lead to concrete achievements. Excuses should not be countenanced for procrastinating in the remaining implementation steps of the April 2013 Agreement, nor, I believe, should older issues become shackles on the stakeholders to embrace opportunities to open new ground in this dialogue.

Along with our European Union (EU) and other international partners on the ground, I continue to encourage the political leaders in Belgrade and Pristina to demonstrate creativity and foresight in identifying areas of common interest. It is also important for technical engagements at working levels to be free from polemical haggling and focus on facilitating delivery of tangible results that directly benefit people's lives.

With regard to the vital processes of judicial integration, it is encouraging that the recruitment of judges and prosecutors has begun, with a number of applications having been submitted for these positions by yesterday's deadline. I trust this process will continue with flexibility and goodwill, particularly regarding educational qualifications. I applaud the initiative of Prime Ministers Vučić and Mustafa to also communicate directly to resolve pressing issues. Such direct engagements, which usefully complement and help maintain the momentum of their structured dialogue, should gradually become the norm, rather than the headline-worthy exceptional event.

One of the core provisions of the April 2013 Agreement, namely the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, however, remains unresolved. Steady leadership is required from both Pristina and Belgrade in order to enable progress during the technical discussions in Brussels scheduled for today. While fully acknowledging the complexity of issues and time required to establish a functional association/community, it will be vital to demonstrate good will in order to maintain the political momentum. Equally firm support on the part of the international community will also remain essential in this regard.

Turning to developments within Kosovo, on 23 April, after some two months, the representatives of the main Kosovo Serb political platform, the Serbian

Civic Initiative, resumed their participation in the Kosovo Government and Assembly. It is encouraging that Kosovo Serb leaders, together with Prime Minister Mustafa and others in his Cabinet, found ways to overcome their differences and preserve the integrity of the governing coalition. Additionally,. a member of the Serbian Civic Initiative was also appointed as Minister for Communities and Returns. After protracted disagreements, on 24 April all four municipal assemblies in northern Kosovo agreed to adopt their budgets in line with Kosovo legislation, which led to the effective unblocking of the municipal bank accounts on 15 May.

I should also note the practical cooperation that has been developing between the mayors of North and South Mitrovica, Goran Rakić and Agim Bahtiri, respectively. On 30 April, both attended the funeral held in North Mitrovica for a Kosovo Albanian boy whose body was found some three weeks after his disappearance. The two mayors, in a meeting held on 21 May with the Kosovo Ministers for Communities and Returns and Local Government Administration, as well as representatives of the Kosovo Albanians in the Kroi international Vitakut/Brdjani neighbourhood, reached agreement on addressing the long-festering issues of returns and residential construction in that area through an interministerial working group. I commend both mayors for their prudent leadership, and believe that the success of such an inclusive approach will serve as an instructive example on the way forward for other issues that remain outstanding in that and other regions of Kosovo.

The 24 May incident in the Leposaviq/Leposavić municipality, in which a regular rotation convoy of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo suffered material damage, reportedly due to gunfire, was unfortunate, and I hope the investigation into that regrettable event will be prompt and enjoy the cooperation of the local community.

A matter of pressing importance is the completion of necessary steps towards the establishment of the specialist court in order to try cases arising from the findings of the EU Special Investigative Task Force, in accordance with the highest standards of international justice. In my meetings across the Kosovo political establishment, I have underlined the clear expectations of the international community, as well as of those who may have been the victims of past crimes, that there shall be no undue delays in the steps required from Kosovo towards the establishment of the court. I had hoped to be able to report today that the relevant constitutional and legislative steps had been completed. The Assembly of Kosovo is seized of the urgency of the matter, which is tentatively scheduled for action this Friday. In that connection, I have also urged political leaders in Pristina to work diligently to promote a clearer public understanding of the importance of this matter to Kosovo's future. I am pleased to note growing public acceptance of the court as a way to deal with the past and focus on the future. In the meantime, the Chief Prosecutor, Mr. David Schwendiman, has officially assumed his functions last week.

With regard to progress on establishing the fate of missing persons, a total of 1,653 persons are still listed as missing as a result of the Kosovo conflict. Swift progress on this issue is essential to help heal the wounds of the conflict and alleviate the grief of the families of the victims. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)continues to support and encourage progress on this issue, which will largely depend on disclosure of further information by all sides regarding events leading to such disappearances.

The pace of returns and reintegration of internally displaced persons has further slackened, while the continued occurrence of security incidents affecting returnees and their properties further undermines efforts aimed at promoting returns, reconciliation and integration. The repeated incidents in recent weeks and over this past weekend targeting returnees in Klinë/Klina municipality, in western Kosovo are particularly troubling. I have called for intensified efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice, and am pleased to report that several arrests have been made. We will follow up on the investigation and look forward to the completion of due process. At the same time, I welcome the initiative to establish an interministerial group for return, led by the Minister for Communities and Return, as well as the temporary deployment of additional police officers to Klinë/Klina.

With regard to UNMIK's human rights-related activity, let me take this opportunity to brief the Council on the Mission's Human Rights Advisory Panel, established in 2006 to investigate individual complaints of alleged human rights violations during the early years of UNMIK's deployment. The Panel has received 527 complaints and closed 464 of them, while 63 cases remain outstanding. The Panel has consistently recommended compensation for moral

damages. However, the relevant General Assembly resolutions prohibit compensation by the United Nations for non-economic loss resulting from peacekeeping operations. Nonetheless, in my discussions with our local and international interlocutors, I have been advocating the establishment of a suitable mechanism to compensate for moral damages, as well as for further investigation by the appropriate judicial authorities of inconclusive cases.

With regard to the preservation of cultural and religious heritage, the draft law on cultural heritage that was recently submitted to the Kosovo Assembly has generated significant controversy. I welcome the decision of the Government of Kosovo to withdraw the draft law in order to allow for broader consultations, which will lead to the early adoption of a consensual law.

On 30 April, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo. The dynamic approach of the Government of Kosovo contributed to that development. Political leaders in Pristina have expressed their resolve to redouble their efforts so that further progress can be made in upholding the rule of law, stimulating economic development and promoting democracy.

I should also note the regional cooperation within the Western Balkans 6 forum, in which Kosovo participates. The meeting, held at the prime-ministerial level in Brussels on 21 April, demonstrated the potential for enhanced regional cooperation and integration. The forum should be used to facilitate agreements in the future, such as on the construction of a Niš-Pristina highway, the resumption of service on the Mitrovica-Pejë/Peć rail line, and the re-establishment of a direct air link between Pristina and Belgrade.

The powerful potential for efficient regional cooperation was also demonstrated in addressing the recent phenomenon of irregular migration from Kosovo. Similar efforts will be needed to tackle issues of violent extremism. In that respect, the substantial efforts of the Kosovo authorities, including the adoption of the law on the prohibition of joining armed conflicts outside Kosovo, in March, and the establishment of a Government anti-radicalization task force, are particularly notable. Kosovo's law enforcement agencies and leaders of the religious communities have also played a key role. We have already seen concrete results of those measures, most recently in the indictment of 32 people on charges related to violent extremism, and continuing active investigation of other cases. Radicalization is a global concern, and the Western Balkans is no exception to it. I trust that outreach efforts and active regional cooperation will continue so that adequate responses to this transnational challenge are developed.

I would like to also add my voice to those of the many regional and European leaders who have expressed deep concern with regard the deadly armed clashes with the police in Kumanovo, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 9 and 10 May. The violent clashes involved several individuals from Kosovo. I am pleased to note that regional leaders, including the President and the Prime Minister of Kosovo, denounced the violence and took great care not to inflame tensions. Time should be permitted for a transparent and comprehensive investigation by the relevant authorities.

I conclude my remarks by expressing my deep appreciation to you, Madam President, and other members of the Security Council for your support for UNMIK. I also wish to thank the membership of the Council for its sustained and constructive engagement with both parties. That engagement will remain essential in encouraging the full implementation of the April 2013 agreement and in supporting progress on other challenging issues, such as the establishment of the specialist court. UNMIK will continue working closely with its local and international interlocutors to support all vital processes in accordance with its mandate.

The President: I thank Mr. Zarif for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*): I am very pleased to address the Security Council on this occasion. As we sit down to consider the most recent report (S/2015/303) of the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), I extend to the members of the Council my gratitude for the continued attention they devote to the question of Kosovo and Metohija, which is of paramount importance for the Republic of Serbia. Drawing upon the constructive cooperation that we have had ever since the establishment of the provisional administration of the United Nations in Kosovo and Metohija, I continue to believe that our common endeavour based on resolution 1244 (1999) will make it possible for us to

achieve a sustainable political solution for the question of Kosovo and Metohija.

By its constructive approach, the Republic of Serbia has made every effort to render a concrete contribution to the achievement of the goal of transforming the Western Balkans into a zone of lasting peace, stability and prosperity. It is not in dispute that, after much turbulence, substantial progress has been achieved in the region, both with regard to the building of peace and democracy and in the area of regional cooperation and European integration. I concur with European Union (EU) High Representative Federica Mogherini, who said in her statement to this body at the meeting convened to discuss cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on 9 March that "the Balkans offer us all, today, reasons to be proud and optimistic" (*S/PV.7402, p. 6*). Yet the recent terrorist attacks in Zvornik, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kumanovo, Macedonia, are a clear demonstration of the fragility of stability in the region. Therefore, all of us in the region, as well as the relevant international stakeholders, should invest additional efforts to preserve.

Those events have borne out the assertions I have made repeatedly in the Council that the undiminished presence of the United Nations Mission is of paramount importance for stability and for the creation of conditions conducive to a lasting and sustainable solution for the question of Kosovo and Metohija. My country appreciates very much the status-neutral UNMIK engagement aimed at establishing preconditions for a peaceful life together and for the security of all the residents of its southern province and respect for their human rights. We therefore expect that, proceeding from resolution 1244 (1999), UNMIK will continue to carry out its mandate in the coming period as well, in particular in the areas that are important for Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija and that are a precondition for their survival and normal life.

We appreciate the contributions made by other international organizations that, through their missions under the auspices of the United Nations, make up part of international civilian and security presences in Kosovo and Metohija. They include the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as specialized agencies of the United Nations. In particular, we are appreciative of the efforts made by Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in monitoring the implementation of the UNMIK mandate and coordinating the international civilian and security presences. We are well aware of the challenges he faces.

The formation of a Government in Prístina and the continuation of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina at a high level are singled out as key political developments in the report before us. The Government of the Republic of Serbia is fully committed to the dialogue, conducted with the facilitation of the European Union, and expects that its resumption will solidify the basis for the implementation of the agreements already reached. The essence of the process of normalization is to find mutually acceptable answers to questions that burden the life of the people of the province and prevent them from realizing their basic rights. That can be achieved only through dialogue, based on a genuine understanding of the needs and interests of the other side and the readiness to compromise, clearly demonstrable in practice. In that context, I am pleased to note that the report also mentions the direct communication initiated by Serbia's Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vučić, with Mr. Mustafa. Serbia approaches the dialogue with Pristina openly, and is desirous of finding practical solutions that will enable all the people of the province to lead a normal life within a broader process of the region's integration in the European Union. There is no doubt that the participation of Serbs in the political life of Kosovo and Metohija is a contribution to that end.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia fulfils — conscientiously, consistently and in a timely manner — all its obligations under the agreements reached thus far under the First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, initialled in Brussels on 19 April 2013. I am pleased that the current report recognizes the importance of the establishment of the community of Serbian municipalities, which is the key question for the Republic of Serbia in the context of the direct continuation of the implementation of the Brussels Agreement. Let me point out that, going forward in the dialogue with Pristina, the key questions for the Republic of Serbia continue to be the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and property of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and property issues.

I would also like to use this opportunity to emphasize that the Government of the Republic of Serbia has taken a constructive stance vis-à-vis the participation of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo and Metohija in the work of regional forums. Respectful

of the agreements reached on regional representation and cooperation, the Republic of Serbia has acquiesced to Pristina's participation in the Regional Cooperation Council and the South-East European Cooperation Process and in the activities of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative. That acquiescence has not changed the position of the Republic of Serbia on the status of Kosovo and Metohija, nor has Serbia desisted from its views. However, there are attempts to include Pristina's representatives in the work of international organizations outside that agreement. They are not acceptable for the Republic of Serbia and do not help preserve the positive atmosphere contributing to the continuation of the dialogue at all. When, and if ever, these questions are taken up, they should be discussed in the framework of the dialogue. In that regard, although, we continue to believe that the opening of such questions at this moment is not in the interests either of Belgrade or Pristina — or, for that matter, of our international partners with whom we share an interest in the stability of the Western Balkans.

Serbia welcomes the work of UNMIK carried out in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the missions of other organizations present in Kosovo and Metohija on monitoring the status of non-majority communities in the province. The Government of the Republic of Serbia attaches great importance to the quest for a proper solution to the question of IDPs from Kosovo and Metohia. Creating sustainable conditions for their return is the key factor in the process of reconciliation. Regrettably, even 16 years after the end of the conflict, no conditions exist for a sustainable return of the IDPs to Kosovo and Metohija, primarily due to the lack of proper interest in this question by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina. This sad fact is noted in the regular reports of the Secretary-General on the work of UNMIK and in reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR).

Only 1.9 per cent of the 220,000 persons who left Kosovo and Metohija in 1999 have realized a sustainable return over the last 15 years. About 204,000 of those persons are still displaced in Serbia. The most recent UNHCR data presented in the current report bear out the decreasing trend: only 14 persons, it is reported, returned to Kosovo and Metohija in the last four months. Self-defeating statistics indeed. To achieve lasting solutions, key obstacles to unencumbered and sustainable return should be overcome, a consistent and fully implemented legal framework for return, including protection of property rights and security, should be ensured, and the obstruction of returns should be eliminated, with full respect for the principle of the responsibility of international and local actors engaged in the process.

This is an occasion to recall once again the Serbia ops the list of European countries by the number of internally displaced persons in protracted displacement. In that context, I call on the United Nations and other representatives of the international Administration in Kosovo and Metohija to help us overcome the problems that prevent IDP returns and make the situation of returnees ever more difficult, not least by ever more frequently incidents. Surely, a contributing factor in the delay of IDP returns has been physical insecurity, as manifested in the continued attacks on Serbs and their property and aggravated by the atmosphere of impunity for crimes committed against Serbs. Such attacks are widespread: one of them happened during the Christmas visit of Serbs from Djakovica— 12,000 of whom lived in the town prior to 1999 — to the Church of the Presentation of St. Mary in the Temple. It demonstrated once again the intolerance and non-acceptance of Serbs by the majority community and provided ample evidence that, with displaced Serbs unable to visit their places of worship freely and safely and mark religious holidays in a dignified way, the exhortations by Kosovar institutions to displaced Serbs to return are disingenuous, and that capacities to ensure safety and security to all in Kosovo and Metohija, especially at the local level, are non-existent. Under the anti-discrimination law and other rules and regulations in force in Kosovo and Metohija in this area, obstructing access to places of worship and preventing religious practices for the purpose of preserving one's identity are violations of law. This problem calls for a dedicated commitment if we are to overcome the present situation. Such a commitment would also demonstrate the goodwill and the serious intention of all the relevant actors and serve the purpose of normalizing relations, making life together possible and respecting the basic rights and fundamental freedoms of all residents of Kosovo and Metohija.

The decrease in the number of potentially ethnically motivated incidents is noted in the report before us, just as is the increase in the number of incidents affecting unoccupied properties owned by non-majority communities, and religious and cultural sites. Such comparisons are unbecoming, since we cannot tolerate

any attack on members of other communities. The incidents are eloquent proof that much serious and genuine work still has be done to achieve reconciliation and approach this problem in an appropriate way, and that appropriate records on them should be kept and their perpetrators tried.

Creating conditions for Serbs and other non-Albanians to enjoy basic human rights and the rights belonging to them as non-majority populations in the province without discrimination would certainly help improve the general atmosphere for IDP returns. We regret the fact that the recent closure of the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights in Pristina — justified by financial constraints — was done without consultation with the Republic of Serbia and, if anything, is unwarranted by the situation of human rights in Kosovo and Metohija.

Last April, the Republic of Serbia submitted a report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture, in which it pointed out that it was unable to report on the Convention's implementation on part of its territory under international administration. In that regard, we welcome the recent decision by the Committee against Torture to request information from UNMIK on the implementation of the Convention in Kosovo and Metohija.

We condemn each and every act of desecration of a religious site of any religion. In that regard, the cause of our deep concern is not only the desecration of a cultural monument of world renown such as the Visoki Dečani Monastery, but also the fact that it was desecrated with graffiti glorifying the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the "future Caliphate", at the time when the international community is investing enormous efforts to suppress this scourge as the greatest threat to peace and stability in the world.

As I did the last time I addressed the Council (see S/PV.7377), it is with concern that I warn that the desecration of Serbian churches and monasteries has continued and that, last January, "UÇK" graffiti were scribbled on the Orthodox church in Lipljan and on the fence wall of the church in Djakovica, despite security provided by the Kosovo Police Force. Those acts, let me point out, present not only threats and insults to the Serbian Orthodox Church and its clergy, but also a way to intimidate the remaining Orthodox population in the province, which is preponderantly Serb.

I take this opportunity to point to the need for taking additional measures to protect the Serbian cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo and Metohija. Attacks on such sites are tantamount to attacks on the identity of the Serbs, and influence in the direct way their feelings of security and acceptance in the local community. They call into question the commitment of the competent authorities in the province to the protection and preservation of the Serbian cultural and religious heritage. At the same time, we are witness to the parallel process of altering historic facts aimed at marginalizing and eliminating the presence of Serbs and Serbia in the history of Kosovo and Metohija.

In the context of the struggle against terrorist threats and the rise of violent extremism globally, the need for greater security has assumed an added dimension. As a sponsor of resolution 2178 (2014), the Republic of Serbia has taken all necessary steps to suppress the financing and organizing of terrorism, which are ever-more frequent phenomena related to the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters to join armed terrorist organizations in the Middle East, such as the Islamic State. Serbia will continue to act resolutely in the efforts to suppress terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We expect the international missions in Kosovo and Metohija and the local provisional institutions of self-government to contribute within their powers to our common struggle, which has global importance.

In the context of the priority importance that the Government of the Republic of Serbia attaches to the solution of the property issues in Kosovo and Metohija, let me draw the Council's attention to the ongoing privatization processes conducted by the Kosovo privatization agency, contrary to international and European conventions on human rights. UNMIK, too, once assessed that the process is contrary to resolution 1244 (1999), since the agency was not established under the laws in force in Kosovo and Metohija, in accordance with the resolution. Much in evidence is the tendency to privatize public and socially owned companies in communities with Serbian majority populations. Those companies are sold to persons of Albanian nationality. The nationality of the persons coming into possession of the companies is not in dispute; rather, it is the fact that the unlawful measures being taken are motivated by the destruction of the economic resources of Serbian communities.

I take this opportunity to point out the importance of appropriately addressing the property issue of the Trepca complex, mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. Any other solution of the issue other than that achieved through the Brussels dialogue, would be unacceptable to Serbia. I am convinced that we all are aware of the importance of respect for ownership rights, irrespective of whether private or State property is involved. In that sense, it is necessary to ensure that all activities in Kosovo and Metohija relative to privatization be returned to the valid legal framework, in particular since such activities necessarily have an ethnic connotation in the province, which is inadmissible in the democratic world. I recall that the protection of the property of economic entities and the suspension of privatization in Serbian communities are important items of the coalition Agreement on the basis of which the representatives of the Serbian community entered the Pristina Government. The Agreement was reconfirmed at the meeting in Brussels on 21 April 2014.

The importance of the continued monitoring and assessment of the work of Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, the judiciary and other agencies and their readiness to take over the executive powers now exercised by EULEX, as provided for in the June 2014 decision to extend and reconfigure its mandate, cannot be emphasized strongly enough. On a number of occasions, Serbia has pointed to the need for continuous monitoring and for establishing objective criteria for the assessment of the work of Provincial Institutions by the relevant missions present in Kosovo and Metohija under United Nations auspices. In its *Kosovo Progress Report 2014*, the European Commission noted that much remained to be done with respect to the functioning and responsibility of the provincial judiciary. The report also noted that concrete results were needed in the fight against organized crime, corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

The current situation in the province bears out our assessment that conditions have not been fulfilled for the transfer of competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. The fact that those competencies have been entrusted to EULEX does not diminish the powers and responsibility of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. I expect EULEX, within its mandate, to continue to exercise its executive powers in the field of the rule of law, against the backdrop of the realistic assessment of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija in that area.

Serbia is committed to the process of reconciliation. We consider it to be important for the process that we confront our own past and, in that context, establish the fate of the missing persons. That is important primarily to the families of the missing persons and contributes to the process of inter-ethnic reconciliation in the province. In order to establish the fate of the missing persons, the Serbian expert teams cooperate with UNMIK and EULEX, as well as with the competent authorities in Kosovo and Metohija. The process of mutual reconciliation cannot be complete without the prosecution of the former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army responsible for the persecution of Serbs, Roma and other non-Albanians, as well as their political opponents among Kosovo and Metohija Albanians. We expect the necessary conditions to be created to try those suspected of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. We attach special importance to trying the cases arising from the findings of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force on the inhumane treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs. We expect the decision on the establishment of the specialist court to be taken as soon as possible.

In conclusion, let me point out once again that the quest for a lasting and sustainable solution for Kosovo and Metohija is a national priority for Serbia. Such a solution can be arrived at only through negotiations and dialogue with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina and in full respect for the legitimate interests of the Albanian, Serbian and other populations in Kosovo and Metohija, on the basis of resolution 1244 (1999). The solution to the question of Kosovo and Metohija must be in the interests of our citizens, who should be able to live in normal conditions, just as all communities should be ensured a safe life together.

On our road to such a solution, we must achieve mutual reconciliation. That will surely be helped by the process of the adoption of European standards and values that we have begun on the journey of our entire region to European integration. We believe that the commitment to European integration is the principal driving force behind the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. We expect the European Union to also continue its active engagement in facilitating our dialogue with Pristina. The Government of the Republic of Serbia will certainly continue its active engagement in the implementation

of the Brussels Agreement in the interest of peace, economic progress and reconciliation.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Thaçi.

Mr. Thaçi (*interpretation from Albanian; English text provided by delegation*): The citizens of the Republic of Kosovo deeply appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the Security Council in Kosovo, which have been among the most successful United Nations missions. As the United Nations begins to celebrate its seventieth anniversary, it is aware of that success in Kosovo. In the 1990s, the United Nations was intensely engaged in Kosovo and condemned the oppression by the Slobodan Milošević regime. In 1999, the United Nations created the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in order to end all the illegal measures and oppression undertaken by Serbian Kosovars in order to create the Kosovar Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. We declared our independence, which has been recognized by most States Members of the United Nations, and UNMIK has certainly helped transform all the institutions of the Kosovo Government.

Although the Mission remains in Kosovo because of a lack of consensus within the Council, we believe that the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/303) during the fifteenth year of the UNMIK presence demonstrates success and the victory of democracy in that European country. Today, Kosovo has 90 per cent less violence, and the capital, according to United Nations statistics, is one of the most secure cities in Europe and the region.

Concerning political developments in Kosovo, let me say that the new Government, which was created by a broad coalition that includes the two main political parties and all minority parties, has had a very encouraging start in socioeconomic development. Last year, we held elections to create that coalition and proved that the independent institutions of Kosovo, such as the Constitutional Court and the presidency, are highly respected by all political factions, and that the democratic processes are respected by all.

At the beginning, we adopted an economic programme. In the first five months we gained two large investors, including a French consortium that signed a €400 million contract for the development of a key centre in Brezovica. The centre is going to be built in a region that is populated by Serbs and Albanians and will create 4,000 new jobs, promote the integration of Kosovo and help develop this poor part of Kosovo.

We also have an agreement with the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development and the European Union (EU) to identify energy investments. An American company has been selected to invest about $1 billion, which also involves UNMIK support. These contracts represent about 25 per cent of all investments in Kosovo. We have increased investments to $60 million, and we have obtained other investors. We foresee an increase of 3 per cent in economic development; since independence this has been the highest economic development rate in Europe for the past seven years.

We now have to focus on the creation of new jobs, which is the first priority for Kosovars. That is how we basically justify ourselves vis-à-vis the population. We had a political crisis last year; in the past three months there has been an influx of migrants from Kosovo trying to achieve a better life in other European countries to seek asylum.

We were deeply unhappy with our neighbour Serbia, which in the past two months has opened its borders with Hungary. There is a great deal of footage in the media showing the Serbian police taking bribes in order to assist this illegal migration. Following a sensitization campaign, we were able to identify some of the traffickers. A number of measures have been taken by Germany, Austria and Hungary, and we were therefore able to decrease the rate of migration by 95 per cent in the space of a month, earning us praise from the European Commission.

Now we are waiting for the European Union to liberalize the visa regime in Kosovo, which is the last country in the Balkans to require Schengen visas. Freedom of movement is one of the main factors that is increasing frustration among Kosovars. The Government of Kosovo during its first year faced a political crisis, after the Serbian Minister was fired. Now the Serbian parties have returned to the Assembly, and we are working together with the Government to develop Kosovo.

After achieving agreement in Brussels and after a 15-year boycott, today Serbs from the north participate in all Kosovo institutions; this is an excellent result from our joint work.

In the meantime, we held a high-level dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia and have reached an agreement aimed at closing all illegal structures within the Kosovo justice system and integrating judges,

prosecutors and lawyers into the Kosovo justice system. In every agreement and at every step of the dialogue, we have managed to normalize dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. It is the goal of both Governments and of our partners from the EU and the United States that both countries — Kosovo and Serbia — become members of the European Union and not face any obstacles in that respect.

We would like Serbia to stop its destructive propaganda, which only obstructs dialogue. I have met with the Serbian leadership on approximately 40 occasions, and I want to believe that the time of racist propaganda has truly passed. The continuation of this dialogue includes a meeting with Mr. Vučić and Mr. Mustafa. We should openly talk to one another, as good neighbours.

A few weeks ago Kosovo organized a conference of six countries to discuss the region's infrastructure. One of the projects that has been approved and will be financed by the European Union is a new highway connecting Kosovo with Serbia, which should encourage and promote regional cooperation.

Kosovo is dedicated to participating in youth exchanges. Serbia and Kosovo should enable visits by youth to one another's countries, as Germany and France did after the Second World War.

It is important to talk today about good-neighbourliness, as Kosovo has become a stronger country dedicated to a European path. We have had some unfortunate incidents in the region that could undermine regional security. Following the deepening of the political crisis in Skopje, there was an incident in which police and armed men died. Some of the young men arrested were from Kosovo. I wish here to be clear, as we have been all along. The Government of Kosovo strongly condemns the violence in Macedonia, which is very destructive and disruptive, and every step should be taken through dialogue and institutional means. We will not support any attempt to destabilize the region. Macedonia is a partner and ally of Kosovo on the path to European integration and NATO, and we strongly support the Ohrid agreement as the only solution for the Macedonians.

We have heard accusations relating to greater Albania, that Kosovo is working in that respect, Albania is working in that respect, but these are baseless accusations. We believe that in Macedonia we need greater democracy and the full implementation of the Ohrid agreement, as a guarantee of stability and the functioning of multi-ethnic Macedonia and its Euro-Atlantic perspective.

Kosovo wants an independent international investigation into what happened in Kumanovo. Greater Albania is talked about in Belgrade more than here in Pristina, unfortunately. We have won the war against the Milosevic regime, and we also gained our independence based on the Ahtisaari plan. We will also win the battle for the integration into the European Union and NATO. Those who are against NATO and the European Union would like to create a fog and insecurity in the Balkans, but we will not allow such against NATO and the EU, whatever they may be, to undermine the success of the Balkans after the independence of Kosovo.

We have signed an agreement on the demarcation of borders with Macedonia, and in a few weeks Kosovo will end its demarcation with Montenegro as well. We are the only country that has confirmed its borders with most of our neighbours without using any kind of violence or resorting international courts of justice. This proves that in Kosovo no one is talking about changing borders. We are heading towards Brussels, where borders have no meaning. We are working towards a new Balkans and a new Europe.

Let me speak about some of the positive developments in Kosovo. We have adopted a law preventing our citizens from taking part in foreign wars, and the number of Kosovars in Syria has decreased by 50 per cent. We have arrested about 100 people who were participating in this war, and they may be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison based on this new law. The Government participates in the coalition to combat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and we have suggested some specific steps to strengthen that coalition. This week we convened 150 guests to discuss methods for using social media to fight violent extremism. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and UNMIK for supporting that project, which enjoyed the participation of the entire country of Kosovo and all religions.

Based on a British Council survey, 90 per cent of Kosovars would like to participate in or become members of NATO and the EU. Last week, we had a march by members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Kosovo is one of the few countries in South-East Europe in which that community enjoys constitutional protection.

It is important to report on another matter, which has been taken up by the Security Council, which concerns the victims of the families in Kosovo. We have continued the process of creating special chambers within the Kosovo judicial system, which is largely connected to the accusations of Chief Prosecutor Williamson, based on the accusations of Dick Marty. We believe that most of those accusations are baseless. But, in order to clarify the history of the war and individual cases, we will create that independent, international institution. The Kosovo constitutional court has ruled that the Constitution allows for the creation of such a court in a third country. In accord with the Constitution, the Assembly of Kosovo will vote on 29 May to create the special chambers court.

Some 13,000 people died in the last conflict; approximately 1,600 are still missing. Most are Albanians, but there are also Serbs and other minorities. That is a tragic number, but it is 150 times smaller than the number of victims in Syria or in Iraq. We are very grateful to the international community for providing the means to continue to investigate Dick Marty's accusations. Along with the verdicts by UNMIK courts and the trials by The Hague Tribunal, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and domestic courts, this represents the fifth time that members of the Kosovo Liberation Army are being investigated.

Some in this Chamber, as well as the people of Kosovo, ask me why we should waste €300 million to investigate those alleged crimes. It is vital to clarify the history of the war of Kosovo, which was supported at the time by the progressive world. I will personally never allow those special chambers created due to the suspicions contained in Dick Marty's report to be used to rewrite our history. It is therefore a waste of time to use that instrument to change the history that was brought about by the former Government of Serbia. No one in the Balkans will forget the terror created by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. No one in the Balkans will forget the genocide of Srebrenica. No one will forget the verdicts against the Serbian leadership by The Hague Tribunal, which found clear evidence that the Government of Serbia was the main cause of the war in Kosovo in its drive to create a greater Serbia. I encourage members to read that verdict, which details the extent of the past century's oppression in Kosovo. The war in Kosovo was provoked and led by the Government of Serbia, and the Serbian State is directly responsible for the crimes committed in Kosovo.

I strongly believe in the reconciliation of peoples. Last week, Antigua and Barbuda recognized Kosovo, and Kosovo has become a member of Francophone organizations and of the International Olymbic Committee. We will soon be applying for membership in other international organizations, which proves that the independence of Kosovo is immutable and final. The International Court of Justice has determined that Kosovo's declaration of independence did not breach international norms, and its status has been deemed final with the authorization of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. That dialogue has been a historic success. After 100 years of hate and conflict, we are now working on reconciliation and understanding and for full normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

I would like now to make a few remarks about our position as the process for normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia draws towards conclusion. This is the moment to initiate dialogue at a higher level, namely, the demarcation phase between Kosovo and Serbia, which will be concluded by mutual recognition of both countries. The bilateral demarcation agreement between Kosovo and Serbia should also be recognized by the Security Council. That will enable Kosovo to become a Member of the United Nations and will allow Serbia to accelerate its integration into the EU and NATO. Of course, Kosovo will continue on its own path for speedy membership in the EU and NATO.

Only peace between Albanians and Serbs can guarantee sustainable peace in the region and in the Balkans. Reconciliation and stability will not be achieved by forgetting the past. We will teach Kosovars, Serbs and Albanians not to forget the past. This year, we mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and we are still terrified by the destruction caused by Adolf Hitler. Youth will never forget the lessons of the Holocaust. We have built a monument to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust in the courtyard of the Kosovo Government in order not to forget what happened in Auschwitz. Nor should we in the Balkans forget the nationalism of the time of Slobodan Milosevic: it can return. Last year, we worked to document the crimes and the victims caused by that regime. Kosovars will soon address the International Court of Justice for the genocide committed by Serbia. We will also ask for war reparations, not addressed to the current Government but to history, in order not to forget what has happened in Kosovo.

To conclude, I call on the Security Council to recognize the progress that, with its help, has been made in Kosovo. We ask the Council to end the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, because it has finished its executive functions in Kosovo and has only a monitoring role. I invite members to work to that end, because in today's world — with its many divisions, cultures, religions and politics, with the current developments in Africa, in Ukraine, in the Middle East — Kosovo is a joint success story.

We still face many challenges in Kosovo to create a dignified State and to become a member of the EU and NATO, but we are on the right path.

The President: I thank Mr. Thaçi for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like, at the outset, to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for his briefing. I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, and thank them for their statements.

We take note of the report of the Secretary-General for the period from 16 January to 15 April 2015 (S/2015/303), which highlights the priorities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and key developments since the previous report (S/2015/74).

With respect to political developments, we commend the establishment of a new Government and the renewal of the high-level dialogue on 9 February in Brussels between Belgrade and Pristina, represented by the two Prime Ministers, under the aegis of the European Union. Those discussions led to concrete results, the most important of which was the agreement on integrating minorities' representatives into the judicial system.

As to the security situation, despite the general calm observed, there have been scattered demonstrations of discontent, denouncing the social problems faced by and acts of ethnically based violence committed against religious minorities places of worship. That has exacerbated ethnic and religious tensions between Muslims and Serbs. Such incidents will not help national reconciliation. It is regrettable that they led to the withdrawal from the Government of the Minister for Communities and Returns, Mr. Aleksandar Jablanović, who is himself Serb, and the suspension of any participation by him in the consensus Government.

Chad nonetheless welcomes the decision taken by Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić on 26 March to establish telephone contact with Mr. Isa Mustapha, his counterpart in Pristina. We commend that initiative, which is the first of its kind, will help strengthen cooperation between the two leaders and is a good step towards appeasing tensions and reducing incidents between the two communities.

We welcome the commitment of the Government to combating violent extremism, radicalism and terrorism through the vote by the Assembly of Kosovo on 12 March on the law banning involvement in armed conflict outside of Kosovo, in particular in Syria and Iraq.

Regarding illegal immigration towards Europe, we commend the praiseworthy efforts of the Kosovo authorities to combat that trend, but urge them to do more to dismantle the criminal networks that underpin it.

Regarding disappeared persons, Chad welcomes the publication on 4 February of the Kosovo Memory Book. The Book — which lists the names of some 13,535 people, civilians and military personnel, who were killed in the conflict between 1998 and 2000 — is an important step, even if 1,655 victims have not been identified to date. We therefore welcome the ongoing support of UNMIK to shed more light on that issue. We also commend the voluntary return, in January, February and March of 36 people. Over 25,896 people from minority groups have thus returned since 2000. We believe that the normalization of that situation necessarily involves providing assurances to and guaranteeing security for ethnic minorities.

However, despite those signs of improvement, there are ongoing issues that hamper good will between the communities, in particular with respect to property and the illegal occupation of homes and other areas belonging to Serbs. We commend in that respect the technical support by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aimed at resolving such disputes through the provision of property titles. We congratulate and encourage the European Union

Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and its monitoring, mentoring and advising team for the 16 January resumption of its work for the first time since April 2014, when it had to stop owing to security concerns. Chad also commends the appointment of an independent and experienced lawyer who is to carry out an inquiry into allegations of negligence and cover-up by EULEX personnel. We reiterate our trust in that institution, which should continue to monitor the situation and carry out its responsibilities in terms of the rule of law.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our support and encouragement to Pristina regarding the significant progress made on national reconciliation and the normalization of its relations with Belgrade. We would also reiterate our support and congratulations to UNMIK for promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo and in the region, in line with resolution 1244 (1999), and to the Kosovo Force and OSCE for their ongoing commitment and unfailing efforts.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his comprehensive update on Kosovo. I also thank His Excellency Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi for their statements.

The resumption of high-level meetings between Belgrade and Pristina within the context of the European Union-facilitated dialogue is a significant development. We encourage both sides to consolidate the gains made in the renewed dialogue by implementing the outstanding provisions of the April 2015 agreement on the normalization of relations.

On counter-terrorism, Nigeria commends the Kosovo authorities for the promulgation of a law prohibiting individuals in Kosovo from joining armed conflicts abroad. We welcome the establishment of an inter-agency task force to prevent violent extremism and radicalization. We encourage the authorities to ensure the early operationalization of the task force.

Nigeria welcomes the progress made in promoting voluntary returns to Kosovo. In particular, we acknowledge the important role of the European Union in providing housing for returnees. That is a vital step in helping them to reintegrate. We are concerned about the large number of cases pertaining to properties belonging to Kosovo Serbs that are being illegally occupied by Kosovo Albanians. It is important that the property rights of Kosovo Serbs are respected and upheld by the courts. We believe that that would help to facilitate their voluntary return and improve inter-community relations in Kosovo.

We take this opportunity to pay tribute to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his astute leadership of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We assure him of Nigeria's full support in the execution of his mandate.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his briefing. I welcome His Excellency Mr. Dačić, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for attending today's meeting. China also listened carefully to the statement made by Mr. Thaçi.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and understands the legitimate concerns of Serbia on the question of Kosovo. Resolution 1244 (1999) constitutes an important legal basis for finding a solution to the question of Kosovo. It is necessary to work on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and within the framework of the relevant Council resolutions to find a proper settlement that is mutually acceptable to the parties concerned through dialogue and negotiation.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the parties concerned, the security situation in Kosovo has generally remained stable. The number of security incidents resulting from inter-community friction has decreased from previous levels. However, at the same time, Kosovo as a society still faces elements of uncertainty in terms of development.

China commends Serbia for actively working to find a political solution to the question of Kosovo. We welcome the resumption of the high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and are happy to see that important consensus on questions such as institution-building in the justice sector was achieved. We believe that this will help the parties to further enhance mutual trust and cooperation.

China supports the efforts by both parties to continue to pursue pragmatic and constructive dialogue, implement the existing agreements, effectively protect the rights and interests of different ethnicities in Kosovo and promote national reconciliation so that people can

enjoy the dividends of peace and development as soon as possible. We hope that the parties will avoid any words or actions that might escalate or complicate the situation and actively search for a durable settlement to the question of Kosovo, which would be in the interest of security and stability in the Balkans and Europe as a whole.

China commends the work being done by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under Special Representative Zarif's leadership and supports UNMIK's continuing efforts to implement the Council's mandate. We hope that UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission and the Kosovo Force will carry out the tasks assigned under their respective mandates and strengthen their coordination and cooperation in order to play a constructive role in finding an appropriate settlement of the question of Kosovo.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for his comprehensive briefing, and to warmly welcome Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi and thank them for their statements this morning.

Jordan commends the Government of Kosovo's continued efforts since its formation to deal with the numerous challenges facing the country. It has worked to demonstrate that it cares about development and has made important decisions in areas such as the integration of judiciary structures and in passing a law criminalizing the actions of Kosovars who participate in foreign armed conflicts. That definitely represents a step in the right direction for reform and development, and we encourage the country's authorities to pursue it.

The changes that Kosovans aspire to for a better life for themselves and their children will require a greater degree of committed, shared action on the part of all the parties in Kosovo. The continuing emigration, legal or illegal, out of Kosovo, will require the country's decision-makers to focus on the needs, particularly the economic needs, of that sector of society, in order to begin to deal with all the problems that hinder Kosovo's economy. It is also vital to foster a genuine sense of citizenship in their country in every resident of Kosovo, something that cannot be achieved until every citizen possesses equal rights and responsibilities without discrimination of any kind. We urge the Government of Kosovo to guarantee that issue for all and to strengthen reconciliation among all of Kosovo's communities.

The rule of law is the cornerstone of every modern and democratic country, and the establishment of the authority of the State and the rule of law throughout Kosovo is an important factor in the country's stability and security. In that regard, Jordan welcomes and supports the efforts the Kosovo authorities have made in that area in conformity with international law and international humanitarian law, and affirm the importance of the work of the United Nations Interior Mission in Kosovo in helping the authorities to strengthen the rule of law. We are also pleased with the action on creating a specialist court to try cases investigated by the European Union Special Investigative Task Force, which should help Kosovo to turn the page on a part of its past.

We are concerned about the events in northern Kosovo in which the central authorities' power has been challenged by local communities in various areas in that region and about the continued ethnic tensions there. We urge the Kosovo authorities to maintain contact and conduct dialogue designed to arrive at an understanding that will ensure that a healthy atmosphere prevails within a united State. We encourage them to institute a programme of social reforms so that all members of society can live together in peace. We encourage the European Union and the country's regional partners to help the Government in its efforts to achieve its goals in northern Kosovo.

Stability and security in the Balkans in general can be achieved only through good neighbourly, healthy, established relationships between every country in the region. In that regard, we welcome the positive developments in Kosovo's relations with the Governments of the region, particularly in the resumption of a high-level dialogue with Serbia. We reiterate the importance of promoting the implementation of the April 2013 First Agreement of Principles between the two countries. We also encourage every country in the region to strengthen its common efforts and action in every area, particularly in the security, economic and social fields.

The growing recognition over time of Kosovo as a State is a true testament to the country's position within the international community, and Jordan therefore encourages that community to facilitate and to refrain

from undermining Kosovo's integration into all the relevant international organizations and forums as long as Kosovo continues to fulfil the requisite conditions.

In view of the stability of the situation in Kosovo, we support extending the period covered by the Secretary-General's reports on the work of UNMIK.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to the Head of UNMIK and his team for their efforts to implement the Mission's mandate.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo, for his briefing, and we welcome the participation in today's debate of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo.

At the outset, and as a matter of principle, we would like to reiterate that resolution 1244 (1999) continues to be the applicable legal framework for reaching a comprehensive settlement of the question of Kosovo through dialogue and negotiations on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We are encouraged by the fact that the overall security situation in Kosovo remained generally stable and relatively calm during the reporting period. We would like to emphasize the fundamental role that the United Nations plays in Kosovo, through the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), by promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Kosovo Force and the European Union Rule of Law Mission.

We have been following the situation in Kosovo with interest, and in that regard we welcome the resumption of the dialogue led and facilitated by the European Union on implementing the 19 April 2013 First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina. We hope that the parties will continue to take the steps necessary for them to move forward in implementing the outstanding provisions of the Agreement, particularly the establishment of a community of Serb municipalities, which remains a main point of contention. We call on the political leaders of Serbia and Kosovo to address that issue as a priority.

The consolidation of the new Government and the adoption of its ambitious programme for the period 2015 to 2018, which focuses on sustainable economic development, employment and social welfare, the rule of law, the fulfilment of all criteria linked to Kosovo's integration into the European Union, the reforms in the education and health-care systems and the agreement on the integration of judiciary structures of northern Kosovo, are important political measures we want to highlight. We also look forward to the next steps in Serbia's and Kosovo's European integration processes. The adoption by the Assembly of Kosovo of a law prohibiting Kosovo citizens from joining armed conflicts outside its territory, as a measure to counter the recruitment of individuals from Kosovo to fight in conflicts abroad, primarily in Syria and Iraq, are important measures that we and the Security Council warmly commend, in the framework of the fight to stop foreign terrorist fighters.

Despite important political developments in Kosovo, we remain concerned about the security incidents that still occur, such as those in North Mitrovica. We hope that such incidents can be promptly and properly addressed, so as to keep them from affecting intercommunity relations. The political actors in Kosovo must refrain from using violence as a means to achieve political ends. The announced regional cooperation in addressing irregular migration from Kosovo is a measure susceptible to contributing to stability in Kosovo, while further long-term efforts should be undertaken to improve the social and economic conditions in Kosovo as a means of putting an end to such detrimental population flows.

On internally displaced persons, we regret the high number of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and the reduced number of voluntary returns during the reporting period registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We call for a rapid resolution of the property rights issue and for guarantees of security, identified as a main impeding factor to voluntary returns and intercommunity relations in Kosovo. The "self-defeating" statistics, as the Serbian Minister characterized it, should be overcome as a fundamental element for genuine reconciliation in Kosovo.

We remain concerned about the question of missing persons from the Kosovo conflict, and we encourage the Working Group on Missing Persons to continue its

efforts in pursuing new sources of information on such a painful issue.

We fully share the view expressed by some members of the Council on previous occasions that these public meetings on Kosovo should take place at more extended intervals, such as every six months, since it is doubtful whether they make a tangible contribution to progress in relations between the contending parties. In fact, these debates reveal a paradox: while the members of the Council, in general, praise the positive developments taking place in Kosovo and take stock with satisfaction of the mediation efforts being deployed by the European Union, the parties to the dispute, in their statements to the Security Council, on the contrary, reveal sharp differences and quite often uncompromising language not in line with the negotiations they are conducting in good faith, we believe, for a final settlement of the Kosovo question.

In conclusion, we commend UNMIK's active role in facilitating dialogue between the communities in Kosovo, among officials and with international organizations, and its efforts aimed at preventing and reducing tensions and promoting cooperation between local authorities. We also greatly value the work being carried by UNMIK in promoting security, stability, the rule of law and respect for human rights in accordance with the Mission's mandate. As the authorities of Serbia and Kosovo have requested a review of the UNMIK mandate, we are ready to consider such a review in due time.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Security Council and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing on the current situation in Kosovo. We thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for his presence here today and for his briefing. Likewise, we welcome the briefing made by Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

We welcome the resumption of dialogue at the highest level between Pristina and Belgrade, which opens a new space for achieving a more constructive political interaction. We recognize that the European Union has been instrumental in this dynamic, helping to mediate the achievement of an agreement on the integration of judiciary structures in Kosovo. We encourage the European Union to continue to exercise its role as mediator. We urge the parties to develop a constructive dialogue with the aim of contributing to stability in the region.

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has encouraged the authorities of both sides to work together on issues of common interest such as illegal migration. While the actions of Kosovo to stop the smuggling of migrants have made progress through specific policies, we encourage the authorities in Pristina to deepen their efforts to fight criminal groups.

The law on the prohibition of joining armed conflicts abroad is an important step to address this phenomenon. Chile appreciates the measures taken in Kosovo and calls on political and religious leaders to continue working to combat violent extremism and terrorism.

Finding solutions to existing conflicts with local Governments is an issue that contributes to increasing tensions. It is therefore necessary to create conditions for Kosovar and Serbian political actors to reach agreement. We are also concerned about the unresolved issues regarding property rights, especially those affecting the non-majority Kosovo Serb population. We are concerned about cases of illegal reoccupation of territories which are creating an impediment to the progress of voluntary returns and intercommunity relations in Kosovo. Chile appreciates the efforts made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in that regard.

We highlight the work of UNMIK, especially with respect to the judiciary, and with specific actions related to human rights, such as gender equality and the recognition of people who disappeared during the conflict in Kosovo. In particular, we note with interest the study conducted on participation, the role and position of women in central institutions and political parties, within the framework of the Kosovo action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Measures intended to increase the representation of women in decision-making responds to the mainstreaming and rights-based approach embodied in the text of the resolution.

It has been amply demonstrated that justice is important for strengthening peace and for the national reconciliation process. We highlight the work of EULEX in transition matters and in consolidating the rule of law.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the importance of resolution 1244 (1999) as a guiding instrument to be applied in the Kosovo region to promote peace and the stability of its communities.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Zarif for his briefing. We welcome Deputy Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers Thaçi and Dačić back to the Security Council. We would also like to extend our thanks to the men and women of the Kosovo Force and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, who continue to play an indispensable role in Kosovo.

I would like to begin by congratulating Kosovo on the European Commission's recent approval of a stabilization and association agreement proposal with Kosovo. We are happy to see Kosovo taking that important step on the path to European Union (EU) membership. During the reporting period, we were also heartened to hear of continued progress on the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, in particular the agreement already being implemented to integrate Kosovo's judiciary, as well as an agreement to integrate Serbian civilian protection core personnel into Kosovo institutions. We also note the progress made by northern municipalities in approving budgets and rationalizing payrolls. We look forward to further engagement through the EU-facilitated dialogue process in the near future, and urge both Kosovo and Serbia to continue making progress on the telecoms, energy and insurance issues, as well as on the formation of an association of Serb-majority municipalities and a resolution of the Mitrovica bridge issue.

The United States takes all allegations of war crimes very seriously, so let me clearly say that Kosovo must respond appropriately to allegations of serious crimes committed between 1998 and 2000. Kosovo must uphold its commitments undertaken in its 2014 exchange of letters with the EU High Representative by promptly adopting the necessary legal measures to set up a robust specialist court that can adjudicate those cases, following the past summer's findings by the EU Special Investigative Task Force that there is sufficient evidence to indict a handful of individuals for serious crimes committed during that period. We urge the Government of Kosovo to grasp the momentum of the recent months and to unite and pass enabling constitutional amendments and the necessary statutes as soon as possible.

The United States is pleased to support the EU-led investigative effort through seconding a new Chief Prosecutor, David Schwendiman, who arrived in Brussels to assume the role in the past week. We were also pleased to observe Kosovo and Serbia's continued commitment to fighting terrorism. We welcome Kosovo's new foreign terrorist fighter legislation, enacted in March, and its formation of a national countering violent extremism working group, the goal of which is to develop a nationwide plan on countering violent extremism. We congratulate Serbia on hosting a successful counter-terrorism conference in April and particularly commend Serbia's inclusive approach with regard to Kosovo's participation.

Both Kosovo and Serbia's membership in the anti-Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant coalition and their participation in the regional countering violent extremism summit last week are appreciated. We ask that Serbia and other non-recognizers acknowledge the importance of Kosovo's membership in INTERPOL as a means of facilitating important law enforcement cooperation on counter-terrorism and organized crime, and not block Kosovo's membership application. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) should support Kosovo's INTERPOL membership by turning its international police cooperation competency over to the Government of Kosovo.

The United States commends Kosovo for cooperating with its neighbours on law enforcement issues. We were pleased to see the national police directors of Kosovo and Serbia meet for the first time during the reporting period. Such exchanges are important, and we hope that they will continue. We also note the Government of Kosovo's measured and constructive response to the events in Macedonia.

In closing, I would like to stress that while the United States believes the situation in Kosovo remains an important issue, the burden on the Security Council of these meetings must be reduced. Of the seven topics covered by the Security Council under the debate format, UNMIK has accounted for fully 25 per cent of all meetings in just the past 12 months. Only the situation in Afghanistan receives the same level of attention in this format. We reiterate our preference that the Council extend the reporting period for the Secretary-General to every six months.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Farid Zarif, for his briefing. We also welcome the participation of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and of Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

While reiterating its strict adherence to international law, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela again expresses its view that the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) remains the applicable international legal basis for achieving a comprehensive settlement within the framework of political negotiations on the question of Kosovo, while respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Serbia. In that context, we support the resumption of the dialogue and high-level negotiations in Brussels between Serbia and the local authorities of the province of Kosovo with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement between the parties. We encourage further such talks in the light of the commitment of both parties to implementing the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, as agreed on 19 April 2013.

We welcome the indication in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/303) that security on the administrative border of Kosovo has remained stable, although some protests have been reported since the report of February 2015 (S/2015/74), which we expect to be channelled into peaceful engagement. We attach special importance to the positive role that is being played and must continue to be played by the United Nations, through UNMIK, in promoting security, stability and the respect for human rights, as well as its cooperation with the International Security Force in Kosovo and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) under the auspices of the Organization. We trust that these missions, based on their respective mandates, will continue to play a constructive role in reaching an appropriate solution to the question of Kosovo.

We welcome the progress made with respect to the composition of the judiciary in western Kosovo, based on the Brussels Agreement of 12 February 2014, which established in Mitrovica a single Basic Court with a Kosovar-Serb Chief Judge, with one seat in northern Mitrovica and another in southern Mitrovica. We also support the call for the necessary steps to be taken to establish a specialist court to investigate complaints of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the armed conflict in Kosovo. This matter cannot be delayed.

Furthermore, in keeping with our position of categorical condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, Venezuela welcomes Kosovo's adoption in late March of a law to prevent the recruitment of persons as foreign terrorist fighters to participate in the armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

We believe it highly important that full respect be given to the human rights of displaced persons and minorities and to promote their return to their places of origin so that they can fully enjoy their human rights free from discrimination. However, we are concerned that we continue to hear of incidents against Serbian Kosovar citizens in certain areas. It is for that reason that we call for appropriate measures to address the situation and to prevent persecution and hostilities based on ethnic origin or religion. Furthermore, we reiterate our call on the parties to step up their joint work to clarify the situation of persons who disappeared during the war. We are grateful for the forensic cooperation of EULEX in this matter. We are concerned about the legal actions against cultural and religious heritage sites in Kosovo, and we encourage both parties to work together to avoid any further recurrences of such acts that will endanger peace and dialogue in the region.

Venezuela supports the peace and reconciliation process. However, we believe that if the process is to be successful, there can be no impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Kosovo. We must insist on receiving without further delay responses to the situation of those who disappeared during the conflict. We must support the process of voluntary reintegration of the thousands of Serbians who were displaced from their homes in Kosovo. To that end, we must guarantee their security, ethnic and religious tolerance, and the land rights and economic opportunity of Serbian Kosovars. All actions towards reconciliation and political understanding among the parties must be undertaken in strict accordance with the Brussels Agreement of 2013.

Finally, we call once again on the parties to redouble their efforts to find a peaceful, just and lasting political solution that is in accordance with international law, including full compliance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for having convened this debate and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Farid Zarif, for introducing the latest quarterly report (S/2015/303). The report describes the progress made with respect to the 9 February resumption of the high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which was facilitated by the European Union, but pending issues remain and progress thereon is slow or even nonexistent. We must not overlook them. Here I refer to the rule of law, the voluntary return of displaced persons and the issue of disappeared persons.

As the Special Representative pointed out, this debate is taking place at a time when recent, very serious incidents in the region, although isolated, recall the need to make progress towards stability. In that context, once again we see clearly the importance of the role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999). More specifically, we commend the role of UNMIK in the promotion, by means of discreet but indispensable actions, of the necessary progress in the area of reconciliation among communities.

As I said in my statement to the Council on 6 February (see S/PV.7377), we are, unfortunately, not in a position yet to speak of a total reconciliation or any satisfactory integration among communities. There has been much progress in this area, but much remains to be done. We therefore call on all actors, especially those that have institutional responsibilities, to take responsible actions aimed at furthering progress towards reconciliation, which remains elusive. It is therefore particularly important that we comply with pending agreements, which will help to establish a joint association of municipalities in the north, in keeping with the 19 April 2013, in the framework of the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue. This is a key issue with respect to continued progress in the process that began in Brussels, which cannot be further delayed.

I am grateful to Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and to Mr. Hashim Thaçi for their presence and their respective briefings. Their regular participation in these debates, which I believe should be held quarterly, is a reflection of the positive political dynamic initiated by the Brussels dialogue and of the serious commitment made by Belgrade and Pristina. Spain commends this openness and constructive attitude, and we encourage both parties to continue to implement the agreement. We welcome the February agreement between Belgrade and Pristina relating to the reintegration of the various judicial bodies on Kosovo territory. This must continue to be pursued in the framework of justice and the rule of law.

Here Spain would recall the commitment made by the authorities in Pristina with respect to the exchange of letters of April 2014 with respect to the allegations contained in the Marty report of December 2010, which are being investigated by the Special Investigative Task Force. We call on Pristina to quickly take the remaining steps to ensure that a specialist court is set up to look into these allegations.

In closing, as I said here in February, Spain constructively supports — as long as our principled position is respected — any effort to facilitate this direct dialogue promoted by the High Representative. However, it is vital that this dialogue be translated into concrete results that redound to the benefit of the entire population. That would be a final justification and rationale for this process.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing. We are also grateful to His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo, for their statements.

Malaysia joins other countries in welcoming the positive developments in Kosovo following the formation of a new Government in December 2014. Malaysia is pleased in particular with the resumption of the high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union (EU). We welcome the new level of cooperation between the Prime Ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, as evidenced by their first meeting, on 9 February in Brussels, since they took office last year. The meeting proved fruitful as both sides reached an agreement on the integration of the judiciary in northern Kosovo into the Kosovo judicial system. This represents another milestone in implementing the 2013 Brussels Agrement to normalize relations between Belgrade and Pristina. We hope to see continuing dialogue and sustained momentum in implementing the rest of the 15-point agreement. We

welcome the commitment shown by both sides to that aim, as reflected in their statements today.

Malaysia takes note of the overall stable security situation in Kosovo during the reporting period. I join my colleagues in reaffirming support for UNMIK, which plays a key role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. We also commend the role of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo in further strengthening the rule of law and the judicial institutions in Kosovo. In that regard, we welcome the steps taken by the Kosovo authorities to establish a specialist court to try cases arising from the findings of the EU Special Investigative Task Force. We echo the call of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his report (S/2015/303) for the Kosovo authorities to redouble their efforts towards that aim. We believe that progress in establishing the specialist court to try possible war crimes and crimes against humanity will be crucial to bringing reconciliation and closure to the communities of Kosovo. Malaysia also welcomes the adoption of a law by the Assembly of Kosovo in March to curtail the recruitment of terrorist fighters from Kosovo to conflicts abroad.

We have heard from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif today about the political and socioeconomic challenges faced by Kosovars. We concur that there is a need for the new Government to embark on comprehensive political and socioeconomic reforms to improve the living standards of the people.

Malaysia is concerned about the eruptions of violence in Pristina during the reporting period, which reflected the fragility of inter-ethnic relations. We urge all parties to refrain from violence and inflammatory rhetoric that could further escalate tensions between ethnic groups. We strongly condemn any attempt to spread hatred and instigate inter-religious violence, including by descrating cultural and religious sites. As a multi-racial and multi-religious country, Malaysia believes in the creation of a common space for all and in the values of moderation in countering extremism and ensuring mutual respect, acceptance, compromise and understanding among various ethnic and religious groups. We urge all parties in Kosovo to intensify their efforts towards reconciliation, inclusive democracy and development, as well as respect for human rights and the rule of law, and to create the institutions necessary to nation-building. We remain committed to supporting Kosovo towards that end.

Ms. Davison (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing. I welcome the fact that we are again joined by Deputy Prime Ministers Dačić and Thaçi, and I thank them for their interventions.

It has been three months since we last met to discuss the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. In that time we have seen continued welcome progress. The new government has launched its programme of work and the European Union high-level dialogue has resumed. Action is being taken on tackling Foreign Fighters and on the Special Investigative Task Force.

But challenges remain. It is disappointing that the Kosovo Assembly presidency has postponed voting on the specialist court. That delay risks calling into question Kosovo's commitment to the rule of law and to dealing with war crimes. If the vote is delayed further, that would affect Kosovo's reputation, so it is vital that the vote happens at the earliest opportunity. The establishment of the court will be an important step for Kosovo's efforts to tackle impunity. Despite that setback, the direction of travel remains positive. I want to focus on three areas where progress has been most important this quarter.

First, I join others in welcoming the consolidation of the new Government of Kosovo. In its first 100 days, the Government has set out an ambitious programme to improve reconciliation, tackle economic reform and strengthen the rule of law. It now needs to press on with that programme in order to improve people's daily lives in Kosovo. The Government has set clear direction despite the challenges. The protests in January and the boycott by the Srpska list ministers and parliamentarians that followed were early tests for the new administration. We welcome the return of Srpska list to the Government and parliament following the end of the boycott last month, and we commend the response of the Kosovo police to the protests. We are pleased that the security situation has remained stable, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/303) notes, although we were shocked by the recent violence in Kumanovo. We welcome the positive role played by the Kosovo Government in calming tensions after that tragic incident.

Secondly, we welcome the important steps that the Government has taken to address economic development in Kosovo. In a country where far too

many young people are struggling to find employment, such steps are desperately needed. That means developing the economy, attracting inward investment and creating jobs, to give people a new sense of hope. For that to happen, the Government needs sustained and energetic focus on the rule of law, tackling corruption, promoting judicial reform and creating the conditions for investment and enterprise to flourish.

The consequences of not addressing economic development can be seen in the worrying increase in illegal migration. That issue not only deprives Kosovo of talented workers, but leaves migrants open to abuse, trafficking and exploitation. We welcome the urgent steps that the Kosovo Government has taken to combat criminal networks and to increase public awareness of the issue. And we commend the coordinated efforts of the region, including European Union (EU) member States, to help arrest that exodus.

My third and final point concerns the EU high-level dialogue with Serbia. Last month marked the second anniversary of the historic Brussels Agreement signed by Deputy Prime Ministers Dačić and Thaçi. Although the pace of progress has been measured, we should not underestimate how far Serbia and Kosovo have travelled towards the normalization of relations. In the past two years, agreement has been reached on a wide number of issues, including border management, regional cooperation, the judiciary, civil protection and policing. And at the local level, we are seeing good cooperation, including on housing in Mitrovica and policing in Klinë.

We congratulate both countries on the commitment they have shown to the dialogue. The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of both Serbia's and Kosovo's EU perspectives. We look forward to further implementation of the outstanding elements of the Brussels agreement, including the establishment of an association of Serb-majority municipalities.

Let me close with a familiar point. Kosovo's progress is now undeniable. Relations with the region, and with Serbia, are at their strongest. Over half of the United Nations membership now recognises Kosovo as an independent, sovereign State, as do many international institutions. It is because of that progress that we say again that it is long past time to reduce the frequency of these meetings. The realities on the ground, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report, do not merit this level of Council attention, particularly when there are so many more pressing calls on our time. As we move into the third year of EU-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, we must acknowledge that it is the EU, rather than this Council, that will bring momentum for further progress. Our efforts must therefore focus on supporting dialogue in Brussels rather than in this forum in New York.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif for presenting the report (S/2015/303) of the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and for his assessment of progress in the province. We welcome the participation of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and we share his opinion. We have listened to Mr. Hashim Thaçi's statement. We note that it contained a number of grandiose theories that have no bearing on assistance for Serbians and Kosovars in the province.

The Kosovo problem is still very pertinent and continues to have a destabilizing impact on the whole region, as demonstrated by recent events in Macedonia, in particular the attack by uniformed bandits of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) on Macedonian border guards on 21 April, and by the incident in Kumanovo on 9 May, set off by the arrival in that town of a large group of radical fighters from Kosovo who planned to carry out a series terrorist attacks in the territory of Macedonia.

The Kosovo Force (KFOR) is called to take action to restore security and order in the territory under its mandate. Under resolution 1244 (1999), the KFOR mandate includes demilitarizing the KLA and other military groups of Kosovar Albanians, ensuring public security and order, and carrying out commitments regarding border control. We expect that, in addition to its mandate, the EU mission will also make an active contribution to solving these obvious problems in terms of the rule of law. We were astonished to learn that Skopje's information about the plans of the terrorists was apparently conveyed early this year to international partners who play a security in key role in ensuring Kosovo. That warning was ignored.

The Macedonian incident shows inter-ethnic conflicts persist in the Balkans and highlights the high conflict potential of the region. The situation is also impacted by the absence of the rule of law in Kosovo as a result of the lack of the settlement to the Kosovo problem as a whole. This once again demonstrates the

pernicious nature of staying silent and covering up the real situation in the province. Furthermore, the slogans regarding greater Albania are of concern, as are the insinuations regarding the unification of Albania and Kosovo.

The situation with regard to the Serbian minority in Kosovo is still of serious concern, including the ongoing inter-ethnic incidents and the cases of desecration of Serbian Orthodox sites. We consider the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, with the mediation of Brussels, to be a useful instrument in assisting the stabilization of the situation. The protection of the interests of the Kosovo Serbs should be enhanced by the establishment of a community of Serb municipalities of Kosovo. An agreement was reached on this some two years ago. The lack of progress in implementing that agreement is a poor sign. We are convinced that decreasing tensions between the ethnic communities would help give the community real powers, enabling it to insist on the rights of the Serbian inhabitants of the province.

There have been delays in establishing the specialist court to investigate crimes carried out by the KLA, including the trade in human organs. It is odd that the establishment of such a body should be dependent on the adoption of legislative decisions in Pristina when Kosovo is clearly not ready to evaluate such a delicate matter objectively. This a negative legacy of the recent past.

There have been reports of Western diplomats in Pristina trying to persuade Kosovans to adopt a text, written on their behalf, that would apparently produce better results than if this matter were brought to the Security Council. We do not understand how such friendly recommendations can be married with the mantra of the rule of law. We insist on the need to achieve real progress in this area as soon as possible. We note the statement made in that regard today by Mr. Thaçi. We confirm our position that the perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice, irrespective of their status.

We should continue to decisively curtial the participation of Kosovans in conflicts in the Middle East, including in the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other radical organizations. We believe that this issue should remain a priority of UNMIK.

The United Nations Mission is the main international presence in Kosovo. The European Union mediation in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and the transfer of the UNMIK rule of law functions to EULEX do not mean that the United Nations role in the province is diminished. We welcome the cooperation established between Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif and Pristina. Given the broad spectrum of problems, we would urge UNMIK to fully implement its mandate by taking the necessary initiatives. To do so, it should be provided with all the necessary resources and staff. We are categorically against attempts to devalue the role of UNMIK and would urge the Kosovo-Albanian side to fully cooperate with the United Nations presence.

In conclusion, we would like to confirm that Russia's stance on the Kosovo matter remains unchanged. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully in force as a international legal instrument that is binding for all. It is still the responsibility of the Security Council.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I too would like to thank Special Representative Zarif for his briefing and welcome Deputy Prime Ministers Dačić and Thaçi to this debate.

New Zealand strongly encourages dialogue between Belgrade and Pristine, and the European Union's support for this process. We commend the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo for their willingness to engage and hope that this will continue in a constructive atmosphere aimed at delivering concrete results. Leadership and political determination will continue to be necessary to deliver on all agreements reached thus far to normalize relations.

Long-term reconciliation requires due attention to the past to prevent it from blocking progress in the future. We acknowledge the steps taken by Kosovo towards the establishment of a specialized court to try cases arising from the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. We urge the Assembly of Kosovo to take the remaining steps required to complete this process. We also urge constructive ongoing attention to resolving the particular political and socioeconomic issues affecting the people of northern Kosovo. In a similar vein, we encourage continued attention on the matter of missing persons and greater efforts in addressing property issues and other matters that affect the return of displaced persons.

The problem of nationals travelling abroad to join foreign conflicts is of increasing international concern, with Kosovo being no exception. The adoption of a law

by the Assembly of Kosovo aimed at prohibiting the recruitment of individuals into foreign conflicts is an important step in combating this problem. However, the issue will continue to require more than legislation. As shown by the way Kosovo has stemmed the outward flow of irregular migrants, influencing the movement of people requires a comprehensive strategy. Ongoing cooperation with partners in the region, the engagement of community leaders and economic reforms to improve conditions for all residents of Kosovo will be important in countering the issue of foreign fighters.

New Zealand is a strong believer in ensuring that the Council hears the views of peoples who are affected by its decisions. Equally, we must organize the work of the Council so that its time and energy are optimized to advance the cause of international peace and security. Given the breadth of the Council's agenda, achieving the correct balance is not easy.

With respect to the Council's consideration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, we are not convinced that it is calibrated appropriately. We think that the Council should be more flexible in how it organizes itself to monitor the situation in Kosovo, with more scope to ensure that the Council can adjust its activity to reflect developments on the ground while adequately addressing the other issues on our agenda.

Mr. Bertoux (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for presenting the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/303) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Kosovo, Mr. Dačić and Mr. Thaçi, for their statements.

The Council met fewer than four months ago to discuss the situation in Kosovo (see S/PV.7377). The country, which was then coming out of a long-standing institutional crisis, was the scene of violent protests and it was feared that extremists and nationalist rhetoric would take over the national conversation. In that regard, we welcome the calm that has since prevailed in the Kosovo political landscape. We welcome in particular the constructive spirit adopted by the Pristina authorities, who have shown their willingness to advance towards the construction of a peaceful and democratic public space.

That favourable environment has enabled the country to finally resume the high-level dialogue with Serbia, as called for by the Security Council for several months now. We welcome the prospects opened by the 9 February meeting held in Brussels and commend the efforts to that end by the European Union and its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini, who visited Belgrade and Pristina in late March. We give her our full support in this process.

The meeting in late March was an essential step towards the effective implementation of the Agreement of 19 April 2013, a prelude to the normalization of relations between the two countries that we earnestly desire. The agreement on justice signed on 9 February is another step towards the dismantling of the parallel Serbian structures in northern Ibar, which is necessary for the future of Kosovo as well as that of Serbia. We call on the parties to continue their exchanges while continuing to look to the future. It is no longer only a matter of working for the formal normalization of relations, but of rebuilding, in the long run, genuine neighbourly relations that are mutually beneficial. In that regard, the development of trade relations and the legal security of investments will play a key role.

The recent progress should not lead Kosovo or Serbia to abandon their efforts. The task ahead of Pristina remains important indeed. We recall in that regard the importance of establishing an association/community of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. We believe that such action is necessary if the Serbian population is to fully embrace their Kosovar citizenship and cease to consider themselves, wrongly, as foreigners. There is no question of establishing an enclave for Serbs, but instead of asserting forcefully that Kosovo, as a whole, is also their country. The unitary status of Kosovo will in no way be undermined by the creation of such a structure.

The future will also require the consolidation of the rule of law and therefore a fight against impunity. We note with satisfaction the steps taken by Pristina to establish specialized chambers to judge past crimes revealed by the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. We call for the rapid adoption by the Kosovo Assembly of the constitutional amendments and the law for the establishment of specialized chambers, previously scheduled for 21 May and now postponed to 29 May. I would also take this opportunity to reiterate our unwavering support for the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which works every day for the rule of law and security in Kosovo.

I cannot conclude without addressing the European perspective that we want for the entire region of the Balkans. In recent years, Serbia has made significant efforts to move closer to the European Union, through both internal reforms and improving relations with its neighbours. We congratulate them once again on these efforts. We encourage them to pursue the full implementation of the agreements concluded with Pristina and reiterate our desire to see it integrated into the European Union in the near future. We hope that the first stage of negotiations can now be opened quickly.

We know and support Kosovo's desire to follow the same path. It will be long and difficult, but is nevertheless necessary for the future of the country. We know that the Kosovo leaders are fully aware of what is at stake. We reiterate our confidence in them and our full support to their efforts.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Lithuania.

I thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, for their statements. I also thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, for his briefing and his dedicated efforts on the ground.

We are witnessing positive developments and changes taking place on the ground in Kosovo and the region. We are encouraged by the determination of the Government of Kosovo to continue with crucial reforms, ensuring lasting stability in Kosovo. We welcome the resumption of the European Union-facilitated high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. These vital talks have already brought results, including an agreement on justice and on civil protection integration.

We encourage the Kosovo Government to stay focused on the outstanding issues. The implementation of the agreements already reached, the rebuilding of vital economic links and intercommunal reconciliation are key. We encourage both parties to further engage in constructive dialogue, concentrating on the priority areas set at the most recent high-level meeting, held in Brussels on 21 April. They include, among other things, energy, telecommunication, the free movement of persons and the establishment of an association of Serbian municipalities.

The European Union (EU) remains committed to supporting Kosovo as it moves along the path of reform and pursues its European integration goals. The stabilization and association agreement with the EU, which we hope will be signed this summer, will be a milestone in relations between the EU and Kosovo, anchoring Kosovo within the EU's Western Balkans policy and supporting necessary economic and social reforms in the country.

Establishing respect for the rule of law is fundamental to achieving a durable peace, and accountability for past crimes is integral to the rule of law. We stress the importance of establishing a specialist court to address the allegations raised in the December 2010 Marty report. We welcome the progress made in preparing the relevant constitutional amendments and the legislation for establishing specialist chambers to try cases stemming from the findings of the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. We note the positive ruling of the Kosovo Constitutional Court and the deployment of the new Chief Prosecutor of the Task Force, David Schwendiman. We look forward to Kosovo's honouring its commitment and the approval by the Assembly later this week of the relevant constitutional amendments that will pave the way for a specialist court.

We welcome the Kosovo authorities' commitment to pursuing necessary reforms. The new Government programme for the period from 2015 to 2018 is a very promising start. It aims to catalyse economic development, employment and welfare, improve the rule of law, implement structural reforms and make progress on the EU integration agenda, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/303). We welcome the adequate focus by the Kosovo Government on creating social and economic opportunities for the people of Kosovo that in the long run will encourage them to stay in the country and contribute to its prosperity.

While the security situation has remained calm, we have taken note of the continuing role that the Kosovo Force plays in ensuring security. We welcome its continued coordination with the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), which also plays an important role in consolidating the rule of law. I would like to take this opportunity to thank EULEX for expediting the investigation into the murder of EULEX customs officer Audrius Šenavičius in 2013. The approval of the law on prohibiting the joining of armed conflicts outside

the territory of Kosovo — along with Kosovo's support for the South-East European Cooperation Process resolution on combating terrorism and strengthening anti-terrorist cooperation within the region and with European and international partners — demonstrates Kosovo's determination to address the issue of radicalization and violent extremism.

Kosovo's efforts to be a responsible regional partner and to develop good neighbourly relations are particularly welcome. We would encourage further promoting ethnic and religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence as a direct contribution to the security, stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans region.

Finally, like many delegations around this table, we believe that reducing the discussion of the UNMIK report to twice yearly rather than quarterly meetings would be a reasonable step forward in acknowledging the progress being made in normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina and with stability in Kosovo. We also have in mind the very full agenda that the Council has and the many crises we have to tackle.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7449

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7449th meeting
Tuesday, 26 May 2015, 12.25 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Llanos
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Fernández-Arias Minuesa
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Davison
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2015/331)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-15119 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 12.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2015/331)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/370, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2015/331, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2221 (2015).

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.